

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/18/2019 9:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: HC251

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Tongass National Wildlife Rainforest Exemption from the 2001 Roadless Rule

11/4/19 Testimony by Teresa Germain

I was born in Juneau in 1955 and raised in the Juneau Indian Village, graduated from JDHS in 1972. I am a Sealaska and Goldbelt Corporation Shareholder and a Tribal member of the Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) a.k.a. Tlingit & Haida Central Council (THCC). I worked 10 years with the State of Alaska, 20 years with Tlingit & Haida Central Council before retiring in December of 2007, and returned to work for the State of Alaska and retired with 15 years of service. Even though I've retired twice, I still work part-time and the rest of my time I spend doing my "Grandmother" duties.

I have two daughters, Laura Jim, who is the Grants Administrator for Tlingit & Haida Central Council, and Shyla Germain, who works for the Sealaska Corporation for Shareholder Relations. Both girls graduated in Juneau and went on to college, both getting their degrees in the field of their choosing. Both are doing very well in their jobs and in raising their children. I have four grandsons, ages 14, 11, 10, and 2 and all of them are attending public schools in Juneau. It is for my children and my grandchildren that I am here to testify in ***opposition*** [section bolded for emphasis] of exempting the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule.

I spent 35 years of my life working as a public servant for State Government and Tribal Government serving our tribal members that resided in all the communities in Southeast Alaska. I worked hard to educate and train eligible tribal members, both youth and adults, in seeking out and obtaining sustainable employment. And, everybody in the villages, knows how difficult it is to find year round employment that could sustain life in the village. My average annual caseload was about 400 adults, of which about 80% would become gainfully employed and no longer subsidized by federal or tribal government programs, and about 120 youth in about 17 communities. I worked with adults year round and worked during the summer months with our youth. Over a 20 year period I served 8,000 adults and 2,400 youth, which basically means, my life was spent creating jobs and opportunities and that required thinking out of the box.

I give you my employment history because I believe it is proof that we can create jobs in our region without exempting the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule. My work history is an example and proves that a single individual can create jobs without cutting down our trees and extracting and processing all the resources found in the Tongass Forest. Another example, is the Sealaska Corporation. They own 362,000 acres, which is about 1.63% of the 23 million acres in Southeast. About 35% of their land is a working forest and it creates about 400 to 600 jobs and generates approximately \$17 million in wages. That leaves them with about 65% of their land as Mature Forest. The corporation implemented a Carbon Offset program that basically pays them NOT to cut down their trees which in turn offsets the carbon monoxide being released into our atmosphere. Every tree is measured and based on the numbers they get compensated. It takes manpower to count and measure the trees but that is job creation. It takes manpower to perform the replanting and pruning of the trees that were cut down when the corporations were first created. We witnessed the destruction to our way of life when these first trees were cut down. Now we are working to regain all that was initially lost. We have much more work to do and many more years of employment for our people. Will opening the Tongass negate all the money and efforts Sealaska has put into the Carbon Offset Project? For every tree we save, the federal government will cut one down, so who

benefits from this.

I believe your idea to open up the Tongass to create jobs is the wrong direction to take. I wonder if your actions are just a ploy to make us think we will get the jobs and we will benefit when in fact, based on passed history, outside mineral and timber developers will be the benefactors from extraction of our resources. Sure we might get a few of our citizens hired but the majority of the folks that will take these jobs will be folks brought in from outside of Alaska.

My recommendation on the Roadless Rule is to "think outside the box" and create jobs that will actually benefit the local people. Hire folks to build trails, hire folks to do the pruning needed so trees don't suffocate one another and can grow to it's full potential, use the plant resources to teach folks how to process them for medicinal purposes, hire folks to measure all the trees so that you can get funds through the Carbon Offset program. That money in turn can be used to pay the wages of all the folks being hired to maintain the land. Work closely with the Native Corporations and Tribal Organizations to identify potential workers, utilize their training funds, and use their data that's been collected on their lands to develop a plan that will benefit all parties involved in this decision.

Climate change is happening, Mother Nature has taken it's toll out on us these past few years. We no longer get the rain we need to sustain our forest and our fish. We no longer have the snowfall to protect our glaciers and to keep them from retreating. The forest fires experienced in Alaska this past summer destroyed many of our trees already. Why cut down what we have left?

We need to work together to protect our lands, to protect our waters, and to protect our animals and to protect the air we breath for our children, our grandchildren, and for the next seven generations to come - they all deserve to have a life worth living.

Thank you.

[Signature]

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