

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2019 8:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Chose Alternative 1 for the Roadless Rule

Dear USDA,

I support choosing Alternative 1, that is, taking no action to the removal of the Tongass from the 2001 roadless rule.

While alternative 6 (the preferred alternative) intends to bolster the manufacturing industry, it does so at the cost of the tourism industry, which provides more jobs in Alaska than the manufacturing industry by a ratio of more than 20-1. It is also likely to harm the fishing industry, as large-scale industrial logging has shown to cause damage to salmon streams in the past. Alaska is currently the largest provider of fresh-caught salmon in the world, and enacting alternative 6 threatens to damage this important industry. The economic losses incurred in these important industries is not worth the growth of the manufacturing industry. Alternative 1 preserves the beauty of the forest which attracts tourists to Alaska and provides thousands of jobs, and it makes sure salmon streams stay in good health for the fishing industry.

Furthermore, the Tongass currently sequesters about 8% of the carbon dioxide that the United States emits every year. Cutting down these trees will contribute to global warming: a cause that many Americans are passionate about. It does not make sense to attempt to shift Alaska's economy away from tourism and fishing and towards manufacturing at the cost of our planet's health.

There are additional economic challenges Alaska faces if it wants to shift its economy towards manufacturing and away from tourism and fishing, including tariffs on American timber from China. It is easier to maintain, support, and encourage growth in other Alaskan industries than it will be to draw people to the manufacturing industry, which faces opposition from environmental groups, and increasing international tariffs.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, over 70,000 native Alaskans call the Tongass their home and have lived there for thousands of years. Opening the forest up for logging will displace these people and destroy their way of life. Not only is destroying the forest spitting in the face of the natives' cultural values of sustainability and respect for the natural world, it also takes away vital resources that these people use for survival: salmon streams, natural berries, deer, and other resources naturally found in the forest. We need to advocate for and protect indigenous people, rather than continue to steal their land as our ancestors have in the past.

Please consider Alternative 1 as a viable option. It is better for the economy of Alaska, the global environment, and the people of the United States. The Tongass is a vital part of what makes Southeast Alaska so beautiful and great, and drives people from around the world to visit (and spend their money in the state!)

Best,

Maggie Del Re

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