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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comment on the Proposed Alaska Roadless Rule

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting a comment on the proposed rule that exempts the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule. I do not support the exemption and support taking no action, leaving all of Alaska under the 2001 Roadless Rule, including the Tongass National Forest ("Alternative 1" as noted in Press Release No. 0154.19).

As one of the last remaining old growth forests in the United States the Tongass National Forest is a critical global resource that needs to be preserved as such. As a resident of Northern California I consider the Tongass Forest to be part of the much diminished network of old growth spanning the West Coast. I'm grateful for the small portion of old growth preserved in my home state.

As I'm sure you are acutely aware, the United States is now experiencing the impact of climate change with the increase of deadly hurricanes, forest fires, and other extreme weather events. Such events are costing the country millions or even billions of dollars and human lives. At this moment in time there are critical choices to be made in regard to what we value as a society and as a global actor. How do we reframe the concept of resources and value? We need to move beyond short-term profit and think of the long-term consequences of protection roll backs and resource extraction.

There are numerous examples illustrating why rolling back the Roadless Rule is a short-term folly but to give just one example, Pacific Salmon conservation is particularly vulnerable. Changes associated with climate change, hydrologic changes, may threaten the ability of salmon stocks to adapt to disrupted spawning and rearing habitats (Shanley CS, Albert DM (2014) Climate Change Sensitivity Index for Pacific Salmon Habitat in Southeast Alaska. PLoS ONE 9(8): e104799. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0104799>). Current Tongass protections help mitigate, if not completely eliminate, these threats to Pacific Salmon.

Once again, the case of the Pacific Salmon is just one of the many natural resources that will be negatively impacted by the rolling back of the rule. Thinking of the tiny fraction of old growth forests left on the West Coast, and throughout the world, what is the true cost of disturbing such a unique habitat? Are wild salmon not a valuable resource? I urge considering the long-term value in preservation as opposed to the short-term value of extraction.

Thank you for your time,

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