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First name: Jeremy

Last name: Saenz

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Jeremy Saenz and I live in Seattle, Alaska. I fell in love with Southeast Alaska 20 years ago on a visit to Gustavus, AK and GBNP. I worked at GBNP for 4 years and have since spent every summer in Southeast Alaska working as a guide/naturalist/expedition leader for 3 different adventure cruise companies. I own property and a house in Gustavus, Alaska. I depend on the Tongass National Forest for my livelihood as a guide. This area is one of the last remaining wild places in the world and it is accessible to many people who would otherwise never truly have an experience in the wilderness. Intact watersheds, productive marine ecosystems and the synergy of the two create a unique opportunity for life and for naturally occurring change. Humans need this area as both a teaching and learning experience. I depend on the wildness of Southeast Alaska to make a living. I also rely on Southeast Alaska to remind me and others of the miracle that Mother Nature has created by her own hand. I am writing a comment on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS because I am concerned with how the Rule and the proposed full exemption will impact my fishing, the peace and solitude I find in nature, recreating, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, the conservation of resources for future generations .

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. The rule is working fine as it is by balancing the conservation of our fish and wildlife habitat with important development projects.. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for economic livelihood, healthy fish habitat, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, viewing wildlife, keeping public lands wild for future generations, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars . A full exemption does not protect these values, nor does it effectively balance economic development and conservation of roadless area characteristics. A full exemption from the Roadless Rule and increased logging and roadbuilding will negatively impact the Tongass and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around Baranof Island, Chichagof Island, Admiralty Island, the central mainland from Hobart Bay to Stikine River, Kupreanof Island, Kuiu Island, Wrangell and Etolin Islands, all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass. I want the roadless areas in these locations to stay in roadless status in any alternative selected by the Forest Service, and be managed to provide for the uses and activities I listed above. It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support the Forest Services preferred alternative of a full exemption. A full exemption is not in the interests of Southeast Alaskans who live in and use the Tongass National Forest, because The people have already spoken on this issue. If the idea is to recalibrate for change then look at the economic drivers that are currently supporting SE Alaska. Economic change since the Roadless Rule was enacted has moved toward tourism, hunting and fishing and subsistence.. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

It would further harm rural economic opportunities because pursuing the same outdated economic model of old growth clearcut harvesting for export stifles innovation and possibility in other sectors, such as mariculture, sustainable young growth harvest, and rural agriculture. If the Forest Service wants to support rural economic development, they should devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure improve and streamline existing permitting processes for important community projects rather than rehashing old conflicts.

I urge the Forest Service to prioritize the voices of Southeast Alaskans over those of our political representation and corporate interests. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless areas on the Tongass. It will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict on the Tongass going forward.

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