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First name: Sara

Last name: Hayes

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Sara Hayes and I live in Long Beach, California.

I've been fighting for years to protect Tongass, something I will continue to do until it's my time to pass on. Being the daughter of a forester who worked on 3 different forests during his time with the forest service. He taught me about the need to respect the lands, to protect the forests, to protect wilderness areas. With the fires in the Amazon, this makes it even more important that Tongass be protected. I also developed a deep love for old-growth forests, something that is even more important these days since it does play "a critical role in fighting climate change by retaining vast stores of carbon in its old-growth trees." Climate change is not something that is going away. We have to act responsibly for future generations. This is why the Tongass needs to not only be protected for all of us and the future.

I am writing to express strong opposition to efforts to roll back the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) in Alaska or elsewhere. The Roadless Rule was implemented with unprecedented public support to protect some of our nations most pristine public lands, including large parts of the Tongass National Forest. You must choose the No Action alternative. Any other choice would ignore overwhelming public support and harm Alaskans, including Alaska Natives, and taxpayers across the nation.

In Southeast Alaska, tourism accounts for 28% of employment and generate an annual \$1 billion in economic benefit, making it far more of an economic driver than the timber industry, which is less than 1% of the regional economy.

Any choice but the No Action alternative would also put wildlife and critical habitat at risk, threaten access to clean water, and be a step in the wrong direction on climate change jeopardizing Alaskans at a time when the state already faces severe challenges related to rising temperatures. I urge you not to abandon the Roadless Rule in Alaska and instead to put the public interest above corporate profits by choosing to keep the rule in place unchanged.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Regards, Sara Hayes

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