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First name: Richard

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Richard Abel, and I live in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Long ago, I worked summers in the Medicine Bow Mountains National Forest and the Sierra National Forest.

I want to express my strong opposition to efforts to roll back the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) in Alaska and 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. I strongly encourage you to 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 generates 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 fail to address the dire effects of 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 rather to put the public interest above corporate profits by keeping the rule in place unchanged.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Regards, Richard Abel