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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Keep 'Roadless Rule' Protections for the Tongass National Forest

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

The choice you make now will make an enormous difference, for better or worse, not just to present Americans, but also to future generations, not to mention making a difference to the health of the planet itself. The Forest Service's plan to eliminate "Roadless Rule" protections for the Tongass National Forest is an appalling, irresponsible proposal and I urge you to select the "no action" alternative instead.

The Tongass is America's wildest remaining national forest, with more than 9 million acres of roadless areas. For nearly two decades, the Roadless Rule has protected much of our country's last wild national forests from most logging and development, protecting all roadless lands because of the critical role they play in protecting pure water, as well as securing wildlife habitat and areas for remote recreation. This proposal also threatens habitat for grizzly and black bears, rare Alexander Archipelago wolves and wild salmon. Further, the Tongass is one of the world's most important temperate rainforests; allowing logging and development would be a major blow to one of our greatest defenses against climate change - these centuries-old trees store huge amounts of carbon.

Your proposal to open the door to clearcutting and bulldozing is irresponsible and fundamentally threatens these values. The Tongass belongs to all Americans and shouldn't be sacrificed to the timber industry,

A critical point here: The timber industry provides only a small fraction of the jobs and income in Southeast Alaska compared to tourism and fishing - both of which rely on intact forests to thrive. It's even more important to save these last remaining roadless forests because your agency has already fragmented and logged so much of our national forests, harming wildlife and waters along the way. As if this isn't bad enough, President Trump snuck a poison pill into the proposal that would open the door to bulldozers and chainsaws on 5.3 million more acres of roadless lands on the neighboring Chugach National Forest, basically a backdoor repeal of the 2001 Roadless Rule.

Please - be responsible! You cannot undo the damage that will be caused should you choose to move forward with this proposal. I urge you in the strongest possible words to select the "no action" alternative to maintain "Roadless Rule" protections for the Tongass and Chugach. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Julia Kendall

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