Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/7/2019 9:00:00 AM
First name: Lester
Last name: Miller
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Please maintain protections for the Tongass and Chugach National Forests

Dear Secretary Perdue,

I am writing to support the No-Action Alternative for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule, Alternative #1. I support keeping the current Roadless Rule protections in place and intact for the Tongass National Forest as well as all national forests nationwide.

I strongly urge you to oppose the opening of 10 million acres of land in Alaska's Tongass National Forest Roadless area for mining and logging projects as this will worsen climate change damage, destroy Southeast Alaska's economy, wildlife, and Native American communities, and it is against the public's will. Specifics are as follows:

*In view of the "UN Report on Climate Change" (we only have 10 years to avoid catastrophic climate change damage), the Tongass is one of the world's best climate defenses. The old growth trees store nearly 10-12 percent of all carbon consumed by America's national forests - and it's Alaska's first defense against the worsening climate crisis.

*In view of the UN Report "Climate Change Threatens the World's Food Supply," it will be disastrous to wipe out the magnificent salmon runs of the five species of Pacific Salmon. My family eats salmon every week, and Alaska sockeye salmon is my favorite.

*In view of the UN Report "One Million Species are at Risk of Extinction" and the National Audubon Society's warning the half of the world's bird species are at risk of extinction, logging and mining the Tongass furthers those unacceptable outcomes. Logging and mining would severely compromise our last remaining truly wild forest and be a huge blow to biodiversity. These lands are home to a wide range of wildlife, including Alexander Archipelago wolves, grizzly bears and all five species of Pacific salmon, iconic bald eagles, southern resident orcas, and even 1000-year-old trees.

*The Tongass contains the traditional homelands of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Peoples who are dependent on it. Your proposal to destroy the Tongass represents continuing environmental racial injustice by the Trump Administration.

*Your proposal to open the door to clearcutting and bulldozing is irresponsible as well as economically and ecologically disastrous as it allows the unsustainable and failing logging industry to destroy the sustainable tourism, outdoor recreation, and fishing industries and Native American communities. The Tongass belongs to all Americans and shouldn't be sacrificed to bail out the timber industry, which provides only a small fraction of the jobs and income in Southeast Alaska compared to tourism, outdoor recreation, and fishing - all of which rely on intact forests to thrive. As a nature and wildlife photographer, the Tongass is on my list to visit and photograph.

*The Roadless Rule is among the smartest and most popular land management policies the Federal Government has ever adopted. Not only does it preserve that pristine habitat, but it also saves untold millions of taxpayer dollars that might otherwise be spent to subsidize money-losing timber sales which are unsustainable. The value of the Roadless Rule in preventing environmentally damaging and economically wasteful road-building and logging is particularly relevant in the Tongass, where logging costs vastly exceed timber revenues and require unsustainable taxpayer subsidies. The Forest Service of the George W. Bush administration recklessly spent $30

million to clear cut an area in the Tongass National Forest, and not one tree could be removed economically from the area due to its remoteness. These trees were just cut down and left to rot. It was sickening. It's even more important to save these last remaining roadless forests because the Forest Service has fragmented and logged so much of our national forests, harming wildlife and waters along the way.

*The Roadless Rule continues to receive overwhelming support in Alaska and across the nation. Recent polling shows that 61 percent of voters nationwide oppose exempting large parts of the Tongass from the protections of the Roadless Rule. In Southeast Alaska, 60 percent support keeping the Roadless Rule in place, more than twice as many as those who support a Tongass exemption.

Alaska is America's last Frontier and our last chance to get conservation right. We have already lost our other great old-growth forests to unsustainable logging: the redwoods and giant sequoias. The Tongass must be protected and I urge the agency to take action to block this destructive proposal.

Sincerely,

Signed,

Lester

[Position]