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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments in support of the exemption

Thank you for accepting public comment on the proposed Alaska exemption to the Roadless Rule.

Please enter my comments in full support of the Preferred Alternative No. 6 "Roadless Rule Exemption" into the public record.

The Roadless Rule, as we know it today, is an ill-conceived rule that should have never been implemented in the state of Alaska and its negative effects have been felt ever since.

Gone are the days of timber related economies that sustained families and communities with good paying jobs year-round. Gone are the support industries that supported timber and gone are many of the families that were active in communities and school activities. And in far too many cases gone are the direct and indirect jobs that made the young people want to return to the area to have their lives and raise families of their own. Gone are the opportunities for development of other resource industries dependent on roads and gone are the opportunities for increased recreational opportunities for visitors and locals alike.

This letter is in full support of the long overdue exemption. Now for some clarifications:

1. I am not so naïve as to think that Southeast Alaska will see the return of large-scale timber harvest on the Tongass even with the exemption. The infrastructure to support it no longer exists in the region. But for smaller operations with a pipeline of timber to bank on, there can be some vestiges of the industry which would go a long way to support communities in the Visitor "off-season".

2. I do not support, at all, the direct export of logs in the round from public lands. There must be at least primary manufacturing (Cants) for wood that is shipped out of Alaska

Currently the Visitor industry is one of the biggest employers in the region. However, those are typically seasonal low-paying jobs that are non-existent for six months out of the year. Many of these tour operators would prefer that Alaska remain locked up as a primitive park. That is neither responsible nor forward thinking.

Historically every resource extraction industry has had its share of bad practices and methods that are no longer

accepted. Mining, timber, and fishing to name a few; but all of them are essential to the state and to the nation as a whole. Even now there is discussion on limiting the number of ships and visitors given concerns over how many is "too many".

An exemption to the roadless rule is not a guarantee that any resource extraction industry such as large scale industrial timber can and will return. But what it does do is open the potential and the possibility of increasing access for development of some sort, expands the ability to provide increased recreational activities for all, and actually open portions of the Tongass that are currently inaccessible to those without access to aircraft or boats.

The proposed exemption is a good thing and should be implemented forthwith.

Sincerely,

David Martin (40 year resident)

Ketchikan, Alaska

[Position]