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Organization:

Title:

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

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I am writing to you because I believe the Forest Service's plan to eliminate "Roadless Rule" protections for the Tongass National Forest is wrong on many levels. I urge you to select the "no action" alternative instead.

Tongass is America's wildest remaining national forest, with more than 9 million acres of roadless areas. It's an area I hope to share with my grandchildren because it is home to such diverse wildlife. As someone concerned about human's role in climate change I value this forest because it stores a vast amount of carbon, with its centuries-old trees serving as a carbon-reserve life raft in this time of climate change. Logging will destroy animal habitat and release most of the carbon stored into the atmosphere.

This new proposal would eliminate protections that keeps the Tongass in it's pristine condition. It is the largest national forest, but that doesn't mean there is any room for clearcutting and bulldozing! The Tongass belongs to all Americans and shouldn't be sacrificed to the timber industry, which provides 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 fragmented and logged so much of our national forests, harming wildlife and waters along the way.

In addition, I am opposed to your plan to allow the agency to open any of the 5 million acres of roadless areas on the Chugach National Forest to bulldozing and clearcutting for logging. This is simply a backdoor repeal of the 2001 Roadless Rule, which protects all roadless lands because of the critical role they play in protecting pure water, secure wildlife habitat and remote recreation.

When you weigh the costs and the benefits of eliminating protections for the Tongass and Chugach National Forests there simply is no argument to support eliminating the Roadless Rule's protections. I implore you to select the "no action" alternative to maintain "Roadless Rule" protections for the Tongass and Chugach.

Sincerely,

Crista Abel

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