

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/24/2019 9:00:00 AM

First name: Lynn

Last name: Wilbur

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Lynn Wilbur and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I have been in SE Alaska nearly 30 years, I have lived overseas since moving to Alaska and have travelled numerous times to my home state in California. When I first moved to Alaska the timber industry was going broke, leaving in its wake vast swaths of clear cut areas that will take decades to recover. The 19th century preservationist John Muir warned of the consequences of unchecked resource extraction and development, and although many of his favorite places in California are forever lost to the development and destruction practices that occur to this day, the Tongass forest provides one of the last strongholds of nearly intact forested landscapes on the north American continent. That said, I rely on the Tongass forest for food, recreation, well being, and for my livelihood as a biologist and naturalist. I can guarantee that there are countless people all over the world that will and do pay to see this forest just for the fact that there are so few places like it left on Earth. We Alaskans have already spoken out in a great majority to save the Tongass as it is, with no action taken to the roadless rule, for generations to come. The position taken by our so-called "leaders" in the senate is purely a lie about jobs, and is based on the money that they receive from extractive industries. I value the forest mostly for its diversity and ecological economic value, whether it be dollars from tourism and healthy fisheries, to the fact that it provides us with clean air and clean watersheds, to the fact that it is our strongest ally in fighting climate change. I am writing a comment on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS because I am concerned with how the Rule and the proposed full exemption will impact my fishing, hunting, subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, recreating, practicing my culture, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, the conservation of resources for future generations .

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. The rule is working fine as it is by balancing the conservation of our fish and wildlife habitat with important development projects.. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for economic livelihood, healthy fish habitat, deer habitat and subsistence hunting, foraging and gathering wild foods, practicing my culture, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, viewing wildlife, keeping public lands wild for future generations, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars . A full exemption does not protect these values, nor does it effectively balance economic development and conservation of roadless area characteristics. A full exemption from the Roadless Rule and increased logging and roadbuilding will negatively impact the Tongass and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around Baranof Island, Chichagof Island, Admiralty Island, Kupreanof Island, Kuiu Island, Wrangell and Etolin Islands, all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass. I want the roadless areas in these locations to stay in roadless status in any alternative selected by the Forest Service, and be managed to provide for the uses and activities I listed above. It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support the Forest Services preferred alternative of a full exemption. A full exemption is not in the interests of Southeast Alaskans who live in and use the Tongass National Forest, due to the fact that a full exemption completely disregards the voices of the majority of Southeast Alaskans whom have already spoken

out on this issue. The exemption is being rammed down our throats by a lawless president and an equally lawless governor, both of whom are facing removal from office, and by two cowardly and corrupt senators who see a chance to bestow a gift to the mining and extractive industries that fund their campaigns. The exemption is an outrageous and flagrant attempt to stifle the public's will at keeping the Tongass forest alive and healthy. We know that clear cutting damages our rivers and streams, which in turn damages our fisheries. We know that it costs far more to repair the damage from destructive resource extraction than to prevent it, and that there is far more economic value in an intact healthy forest for the tourism industry and for the multitude of southeast Alaskans that rely on the forest for its intrinsic economic value. Why then would we want to waste thousands if not millions of dollars on an absolutely insane plan to clearcut, mine, and extract, with the likelihood that the products from the forest will be going overseas and will not, as it did not, benefit the local economy?. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

It would further harm rural economic opportunities because pursuing the same outdated economic model of old growth clearcut harvesting for export stifles innovation and possibility in other sectors, such as mariculture, sustainable young growth harvest, and rural agriculture. If the Forest Service wants to support rural economic development, they should devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries.

I urge the Forest Service to prioritize the voices of Southeast Alaskans over those of our political representation and corporate interests. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless areas on the Tongass. It will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict on the Tongass going forward.

[Position]

[Position]