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First name: Klaudia

Last name: Leccese

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Klaudia Leccese and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I have been a resident of Sitka since September 1959, except for attending the University of Alaska in Fairbanks and a little less than a year on the Pribilof Island of St. Paul. My family has always subsistence hunted deer, goat, moose or reindeer, fished for personal use and commercially and gathered wild mushrooms, berries, asparagus, seaweed, kelp, clams, abalone, etc. We spend a lot of time in our boat getting away from Sitka to enjoy the pristine wilderness and doing subsistence activities. This is an integral part of our life and critical to the well being of our family. 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 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, Kuiu Island, Admiralty Island, all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass Prince of Wales Island, Kupreanof Island, the northern mainland above Port Snettisham (around Juneau). 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, because We do NOT want to exempt Alaska from the roadless rule because it would negatively impact all those who live off the fish and wildlife, and count on the habitat in its natural state rather than the clear cuts and roads of the past. Not only the various fisher people, subsistence groups and tour groups, but the fish and wildlife and overall ecology of the state forests will benefit from the status quo on the roadless rule.. 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 transition to second growth logging invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure improve and streamline existing permitting processes for important community projects rather than rehashing old conflicts.

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]