Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/26/2019 9:00:00 AM
First name: Joel
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: My name is Joel Brady-power and I live in Bellingham, WA. 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 affect the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest.

My name is Joel Brady-Power. I am a commercial fisherman and fish marketer. I run a commercial salmon troller in the waters of Southeast Alaska in the summer and market my catch from my Bellingham, Wa home in the winter. I strongly support maintaining the Roadless Rule as it stands. Please adhere to reason, small short term profits for a few pale in comparison to the long term financial, ecological and spiritual benefits of leaving this unique ecosystem intact.

I seek silence

find solace in seclusion

but illusions of isolation

cloud judgement

create separation

where there is none

so I can sit on this river

watch it wriggle and wind its way

down from snow-capped peaks and glaciers

through old growth forests and muskeg

watch its current spill out into fjords

sweep across bays

and dissolve into the ocean

I can lose myself

in a raven's song

the wind's whisper

the water's kiss

I can disappear into this wilderness,

step out of reality

and I can pretend

this moment, this place, this peace

is separate, is safe, is eternal

I can pretend the mines upstream

won't keep coming

I can pretend the timber

won't keep falling

I can pretend my fishery

won't be affected

From my perch

I can't see Big Brutus or the hauling trucks

I can't smell the exhaust

I can't hear the chainsaws primal scream

I can't taste the bitterness of defeat

but my bones know a storm is brewing

I can tell myself people will continue to care

That attention and passion wont

Succumb to distraction and disillusion

I can tell myself the world cares about wild spaces

I can tell myself we will learn from the carelessness of our greed

I can stand here on this rocky shore

listen to the ripple and roar of salmon

surging upstream, as the shadows grow long

I can feel the sun's warm caress on my face

and embrace the beauty and serenity of this moment

I can ignore the dark clouds on the horizon

and I can pretend, just being present

is enough

but if I am not willing to leave my tears in this river

and pull myself out of this reverie

If I am not willing to scream my lungs into this pen,

set fire to this page, and rise from the ashes of apathy to action

If I am not willing to stand and fight

for this river, for these salmon, for my own life

then my convictions shrivel to complicity

lost in the sound of my silence

I urge the Forest Service to select Alternative 1, the no action alternative, for the final decision on the Alaska Roadless Rule. This alternative protects the inventoried roadless areas in Alaska that are full of pristine wilderness and provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and already allows for important community and economic development projects. As an American citizen, I value the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach

National Forest for its status as America's best natural solution to climate change and its sequestering of millions of metric tons of carbon and mitigating climate change, its wild salmon populations and the world-class fishing opportunities, its huge swaths of intact ecosystems and all the biodiversity it contains, its status as the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world, the recreational opportunities it provides, the high density of incredible wildlife it contains, to keep public lands wild for future generations, its status as a national and global treasure, the lifestyles of the indigenous communities that the forest supports. A full exemption does not protect these priorities, nor does it effectively balance economic development with the countless other benefits provided by roadless areas. I would like the Forest Service to manage roadless areas for passive/active watershed restoration (stream and habitat) to improve/maintain roadless characteristics (culvert removal/replacement, improve fish passage, wildlife thinning, etc), low-impact recreation (camping, hiking, hunting, foraging, etc). It is important to me that high-value intact habitat including the T77 watersheds and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections in any alternative selected.

The Forest Service is wasting taxpayers' valuable time and money by trying to prop up a failing timber industry in Southeast Alaska. The nonpartisan, independent taxpayer watchdog Taxpayers for Common Sense reported that the Tongass timber program has losses of over $600 million of taxpayers money in the past 20 years. I would rather see my taxpayer dollars used to restore salmon habitat that was hurt by past logging practices, perform restorative actions that support wildlife populations on previously degraded landscapes that support wildlife populations, establish the economic value of the carbon stored in the Tongass. We need to stop subsidizing the clearcutting of old growth on the Tongass through taxpayer funded roadbuilding. If a full exemption were chosen, it would not create opportunities and would instead prioritize the special interests of one industry over the interests of the entire American public.

The Tongass is Americas homegrown natural solution to climate change. The forest sequesters 8% of the carbon stored in forests throughout the contiguous US states, some 3 billion metric tons of it. We must take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and maintaining the Tongass in a roadless state is critical for a sustainable future.

I urge the Forest Service to listen to the voices of the American people and prioritize them over corporate interests. The Forest Service should strengthen public involvement in developing land management policy and focus on broadly supported work rather than allowing special corporate interests to guide policy changes. Attempting to exempt inventoried roadless areas on the Chugach National Forest from the Alaska Roadless Rule adds further insult to injury, and this proposal has not received any sufficient environmental impact analysis or public input. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless areas in Alaska it will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict over these forests going forward.

[Position]