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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Public Comment for Alternative 1, No Action

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christensen,

Please select Alternative No. 1, or the "no-action" alternative on the Alaska-specific Roadless Rule (Rule) and protect all inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest under the 2001 National Roadless Rule.

Dubbed the "crown jewel" of America's national forests, the Tongass harbors some of the last intact old-growth temperate rainforests in the world. Provision of ecological services such as carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities such as guided fishing for thousands of visitors annually, and food security for traditional cultures that have survived in Southeast Alaska for over 15,000 years are just a few reasons why complete preservation of the Tongass heavily outweighs the lost value in resource extraction that a no-action alternative may cause.

Over 140,000 comments on the exemption were received by the USFS, most in favor of keeping the Rule as it remains today. I do not believe that by reinstating the burden that building and maintaining these roads places on American taxpayers for a profit that is not even guaranteed, given the current state of foreign markets and burdensome tariffs, is justification enough to sweep those comments under the hypothetical-rug of the current administration in Alaska, nor the White House. Please allow the residents that have lived here, and fought to keep Alaska's beauty unhindered be the ones to decide. Please hear all of us out, even those that oppose my own requests.

Fact, not opinion, says that the cost of logging exceeds the possible profits that revitalizing the timber industry may bring. Fact, tells us that the timber industry is on life support, contributing less than one-percent to the United States's economy. Along with the other hundreds of thousands that disagree with Alternative No. 6. I believe that focusing our resources instead on further preservation, and restoration of wilderness that has been historically damaged throughout the Tongass is the correct course of action. Visitors from all over the globe do not desire to view the unsightly nature of swaths of clear-cut forest.

In a world where the value of intact forests are more valuable than ever, and the issues currently surrounding the Amazon Rainforest, please consider the ecological services that will continue to provide humanity for the future. Let Alaska be the standard that other nations look to in mending the continuous damage we have inflicted. As a 28 year old, now is the time to step up to the plate for the subsequent generations.

Lastly, the 2001 National Roadless Rule is well designed and flexible enough to allow for access and development projects such as the Hecla Greens Creek and Kensington Mines. Since 2009, 48 projects have been approved in the Tongass, the majority relating to surface exploration of potential mining and hydropower. The USFS has also taken steps to expedite this approval process, now taking only one to three weeks for the Tongass National Forest.

For these reasons, again, I strongly urge you to select the "no-action" alternative on the Alaska-specific Roadless Rule and keep the 2001 National Roadless Rule on the Tongass.

Thank you

Hunter L. Mallinger

[Position]