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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Erik Jong and I live in Sitka, AK. I have been living in Sitka Alaska for 5 years now. I moved to the area because of it's pristine nature and have invested a lot of money to move to a place like that. Within years of moving the forest is under threat of clear cutting. We rent out our property in the summer as it is the only way we can afford to live in such a wonderful place. Tourists would no longer want to come to the area if it is getting developed. This would take a significant part of our income away. me and my family also hunt and gather for subsistence living. 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, recreating, the peace and solitude I find in nature, 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. It protects important fish and wildlife habitat from clearcutting and roadbuilding. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for economic livelihood, deer habitat and subsistence hunting, foraging and gathering wild foods, 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, the central mainland from Hobart Bay to Stikine River, Kupreanof Island, Wrangell and Etolin Islands, Prince of Wales Island, Yakutat forelands. 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 I think it is a bad idea to give a full exemption. Pretty much any project is already allowed under the current legislation with the exception of timber harvest. The methods used for timber harvesting in south east Alaska are completely unacceptable and actually cost more than the value of the timber and the tax payers are paying for this. Lining the pockets of a handful of people can never be a good reason to create so much damage and let others pay the bill for it.. 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 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 devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries.

Leave the legislation as is, it is long term oriented and should stay that way.

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.

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