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First name: Janeen

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Organization: Alaska Wildland Adventures

Title: General Manager

Comments: The Honorable Sonny Perdue

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250

RE: Alaska Roadless Rulemaking #54511

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Please accept this letter of support for the No-Action Alternative for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule, Alternative #1 and request that the long-standing protections for roadless areas within the Tongass National Forest continue.

As a company whose business model relies on recreating in the outdoors, we strongly oppose recent proposals to exempt Alaska's Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. National Forest roadless areas provide some of the best outdoor recreation opportunities in the US. Our National Forest roadless areas - including the 9.3 million acres in the Tongass - are where millions of people enjoy hiking, biking, camping, hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities each year.

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was passed in 2001 after one of the most extensive public involvement processes in the history of federal rulemaking. The vast majority of the more than 1.7 million people who commented during the process, favored strong roadless area protection across the United States.

A study conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association, noted that the outdoor industry generates \$887 billion in annual consumer spending, creates 7.6 million jobs, and brings in \$59.2 billion in state and local tax revenue. Protective public land policies like the Roadless Area Conservation Rule are essential to the continued health of the industry and the communities that rely on these wild spaces.

Southeast Alaska's tourism industry depends on the scenic wildness and thriving wildlife of the Tongass National Forest. These qualities are what attract visitors from around the world to the Tongass.

In 2017, Southeast Alaska's visitor industry directly employed 7,739 people and accounted for 17 percent of total regional employment. And that's not even including Southeast Alaska's fishing industry. The pristine forests and watersheds of the Tongass produce almost 80 percent of the commercial salmon harvested annually from Southeast Alaska.

Tourism and Fisheries jobs make up one quarter of all jobs in Southeast Alaska. These jobs are crucial to the local economy and rely on the wildlife and scenery of the Tongass. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule has provided effective protection both for wildlands and recreational opportunities for nearly two decades. Exempting Alaska, and it's Tongass National Forest from this important national policy in favor of road building and timber harvest would irreparably damage roadless areas and the recreation, wildlife, and tourism values they embody. We strongly endorse the No-Action Alternative to support upholding the national roadless rule in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Janeen Hutchins

Janeen Hutchins

General Manager

Alaska Wildland Adventures

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