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Comments: I believe it is in the best interest of local Alaskans living within the Tongass National Forest and the rest of the country to choose Alternative 1- the No action alternative- in deciding the fate of roadless areas in the Tongass. Maintaining the existing Roadless areas in the Tongass ensures traditional subsistence lifestyles for Alaskan Natives and local Alaskans, supports the existing salmon industry and prevents further economic loss, alleviates further social, economic, and environmental problems, and preserves the integrity and intrinsic value of our country's largest in-tact coastal temperate rainforest.

Alaskan Natives and other Alaskan community members rely heavily on the benefits from the Tongass National Forest that can only remain if the Tongass is an in-tact, functioning forest. Every year thousands of Alaskans hunt deer, fish for salmon, harvest berries, fireweed, devil's club, and countless other flora and fauna to survive. From bringing food to the table to making salves, these resources are heavily utilized by local Alaskans in their daily lives. Not to mention these resources are essential in supporting and perpetuating Alaskan Native cultures, like the Tlingit. By opening more of the Tongass to development and road building these resources are undermined. Trees that have been in the middle of the forest for centuries are oftentimes not well adapted to increased wind exposure after a road is constructed, and are then more prone to falling after wind storms. Habitat for deer populations are severed, their food resources can be made less available, and they are more exposed to the inherent dangers of vehicle in their home territory. Salmon bearing streams in the Tongass have historically thrived partially because of the abundance of overhanging trees that keep the streams at adequate temperatures. Allowing more of the Tongass to be subjected to road building and development undermines the cultural and subsistence resources that Alaskans depend on.

Excluding the Tongass from the Roadless Rule is driven by the hope that economic opportunities could arise, however there is more economic opportunity by maintaining the health of an in-tact forest such as the Tongass. The timber industry contributes less than 1% to Southeast Alaska's economy whereas the fishing and ecotourism industries contribute 25% to Southeast Alaska's economy combined (sourced from the Guardian.com). Healthy salmon habitat that produces an abundance of big salmon is worth more money than profits from timber sales. By replacing natural vegetation with roads, soil is loosened and is more prone to erosion in the form of landslides that could potentially wreak economic and social havoc on nearby communities. Furthermore, it lessens the water-retention and filtration ability of the soil, negatively affecting the watershed and could cost communities more money in producing clean drinking water. The short-term, limited economic gains from a dying timber industry is heavily outweighed by the long-term economic gains from a thriving salmon industry and the prevention of further social and environmental problems. These economic opportunities can only be gained if the Tongass remains protected from roads and other forms of development, and if the Inventoried Roadless Area characteristics are not undermined.

It is in everyone's best interest to maintain the Tongass' roadless protections as is because everyone benefits from the carbon sequestration that occurs in the Tongass. The Tongass National Forest is one of the last national forests that is made up of such a high abundance of old growth trees, which hold more carbon than young growth trees- old growth acts as a carbon "sink". If old growth trees are logged it will take hundreds or thousands of years to replace them, and the carbon they hold will be released into the atmosphere and worsen the

greenhouse gas effect. Old growth trees in the Tongass are virtually impossible to replace. The affects of climate change and the greenhouse gas effect know no anthropogenic boundaries- these impacts will be felt in areas besides the Tongass. As temperatures increase glaciers will melt and sea levels will rise, endangering coastal communities. Natural hazards like tsunamis will be more prevalent and could cost communities millions of dollars to recover from. By allowing roads to be constructed in the Tongass, the USFS would support the endangerment of human lives, collapse of entire ecosystems, and an unpredictable yet threatening shift in the global climate.

Lastly, I believe the Tongass National Forest should not be further subjected to human development because it holds intrinsic value. We oftentimes equate "no economic value" to "no value" and that simply is not true. Despite whether or not a healthy, in-tact, functioning Tongass forest system has any benefits to humans (which it indeed does have economic, social, mental, educational, physical, and physiological benefits that cannot always be equated to a dollar value), it has value inandof itself, regardless if humans receive any of the benefits it creates. The trees, water, animals, rocks, soil, and everything else that makes up the Tongass have existed here long before humans dominated the planet. As capitalism and the consumption culture poisons the natural world we may sometimes forget that we are not above and separate from the environment and its systems. These entities have every right to exist here, just as humans do, and should be able to without their demolition for short-term profits. Regardless of their dollar value or their use to humans, these systems and beings have the right to exist, which is threatened by any alternative other than the no-action alternative of the Roadless Rule.

Parts of the Tongass are still able to be pursued for economic profit in the forms of logging and other forms of development. Current LUD restrictions and physical barriers in the Tongass may prohibit further development anyways, which limits their economic potential. Let the areas that are currently designated for economic development continue to be pursued, but we should not allow more areas of the Tongass to be developed. In Hoonah on Chichagoff Island, the logging industry poses many threats to community members and they have experienced many injuries and deaths from previous logging in the area. Exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the existing Roadless Rule undermines and threatens Roadless Area Characteristics, cultural and community values, current economic opportunity from the salmon industry, poses significant threats to communities and the globe in forms such as natural disasters and global climate change, and disrespects the value of the many unique components that make up the Tongass National Forest. The USFS has not offered my ideal alternative to the Roadless Area Conservation Rule- which is to extend the protections from the 2001 Roadless Rule to more areas of the Tongass. For that reason and the aforementioned reasons, I support the no-action alternative to the Roadless Rule.

[POSITION]