Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/17/2019 9:00:00 AM
First name: Michael
Last name: Painter
Organization: Californians for Western Wilderness
Title: Coordinator
Comments: December 17, 2019

USDA Forest Service

Attn: Alaska Roadless Rule

P.O. Box 21628

Juneau, Alaska 99802

via: USFS Webform

Comments by Californians for Western Wilderness on

Alaska Roadless Rulemaking #54511

Ladies & Gentlemen:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 950 members and supporters of Californians for Western Wilderness (CalUWild), a citizens organization dedicated to encouraging and facilitating participation in legislative and administrative actions affecting wilderness and other public lands in the West. Our members use and enjoy the public lands in California and all over the West.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the petition by the State of Alaska to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule.

We strongly urge you to adopt Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative. This would leave the Tongass National Forest completely under the present Roadless Rule. The present rule has worked well since being adopted in 2001, and there is no reason to change the situation.

The Tongass NF is one of the few substantially intact temperate-zone rainforests in the world. It should be protected for that reason alone-as an example and a laboratory. The proposal would fragment parts of the Tongass NF that are largely intact ecosystems. The forest provides important habitat for sensitive species such as salmon and grizzly bears. It is a known fact that roads cause significant fragmentation of habitat. They also cause sedimentation in streams and rivers, due to erosion.

Almost 10 million acres of Intact Forest Landscape are within the Tongass NF's boundaries. It is a very large percentage of the total in the entire United States. The proposed action would open large areas to roads and logging, destroying the uniqueness of the Intact Forest Landscapes.

The salmon industry is economically important to southeast Alaska. The proposed action threatens the sustainability of the industry by allowing roads and their side-effects of erosion and pollution from vehicles using them, both engine liquids and exhaust, causing nitrogen deposition.

Tourism is also and important and growing contributor to the economy of southeast Alaska. Tourist will not visit if significant areas of the forest are logged over.

It is known that the Tongass stores more carbon than any other national forest in the nation. Logging it will reduce that capacity at a time when it's more important than ever that carbon sinks be preserved and actually increased.

Only Alt. 1, the No Action Alternative, satisfies these concerns, and again, we urge you to adopt it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please inform us of your decision in this matter and please also inform us of further opportunities to be involved in your public decision-making processes.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Painter

Coordinator

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