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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Zoe Kitchel and I live in Highland Park, NJ. After I finished undergrad, I moved to Sitka, Alaska as a volunteer. I was lucky enough to spend two years there, before starting graduate school in ecology on the east coast asking questions about the beautiful landscapes I came to love and respect while living in Southeast. I hope to make my way back there in the future. I depend on the forest for frequent recreation. I now spend much time thinking about how the health of the forest impacts the health of the waterways, and therefore the health of the freshwater and marine fishes we depend on for sustenance and ecosystem health. I value the forest for its history, carbon sequestration, and beauty. 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 fishing, subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, recreating, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, 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 healthy fish habitat, 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. 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, Kupreanof Island. 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 Full exemption threatens one of the most pristine wild places left in this country. Southeast Alaska is known for its healthy forest, rivers, and oceans. Its a reputation known throughout the world, and one that must be maintained for the health of the economy, the security of livelihoods, and the respect of sacred lands.. 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 invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries transition to second growth logging improve and streamline existing permitting processes for important community projects rather than rehashing old conflicts.

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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