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Organization:

Title:

Comments: December 17, 2019

Alaska Roadless Rule USDA Forest Service P.O. Box 21628 Juneau, Alaska 99802

RE: U.S. Forest Service Proposed Rule, "Special Areas, Roadless Area Conservation: National Forest System Lands in Alaska"

Dear Forest Service Rulemaking Team,

Thank you for allowing the public to comment on this proposed rule. I am an ecologist that has worked on plant monitoring and restoration efforts for both the Forest Service and National Park Service. I have studied plant communities in disturbed their areas, and observed how their restoration compares with reference, undisturbed sites. It has been my position to observe long-term effects of human disturbance on ecosystems, and one fact has clearly stood out - once we disturb a natural system, it will never be the same.

As an ecologist that has worked for the Forest Service and Park Service, I believe that the Forest Service's stated preferred action (to exempt the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule) will put this ecological haven at risk of irreparable destruction.

I urge the USDA Forest Service to instead take Alternative 1 (No Action), so that the protections remain in place to keep the landscape from further irreparable damage.

The great rainforest in the Tongass NF provides an enormous carbon sink for our atmosphere. Opening it to the possibility of logging puts the carbon stored in the timber and soil at risk of being released back into our atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

The non-partisan, non-profit group Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) found in a 2019 analysis that between the years 1999 and 2018, timber programs have cost the American taxpayer \$600 million, after adjusting for inflation. To expand logging operations in the Tongass NF would reliably increase expenses for the federal government, and its taxpayers.

I appreciate your consideration in your process of determining the ideal path to move forward. Please consider the long-term effects of your decision on the climate, rainforest, and taxpayers. Protect these resources for the future by choosing the No Action alternative.

Sincerely, Nicolas Matallana

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