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First name: Eileen

Last name: Stark

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a biologist, I implore you to drop Trumps plan, which would slash protections for more than nine million acres of the Tongass National Forest, an area larger than Yellowstone, Glacier and Grand Canyon National Parks, combined. The extremely misguided plan would undercut a sweeping and important Clinton administration policy called the 'Roadless Rule,' which has survived despite a lengthy lawsuit.

The plan would negatively affect more than half of the worlds largest intact temperate rainforest, opening it to potential logging, energy and mining projects. Within its ancient trees, the Tongass stores more carbon than any other national forest in the country, while its fragile ecosystems support an immense number of interconnected species that interact in countless and incredibly complex ways. In 2017 it was estimated that the Tongass held about 650 million tons of carbon, or roughly half of the U.S. carbon dioxide emissions.

Other recent studies have found that climate changes in Alaska and across the Arctic are outpacing changes occurring across the planet, causing loss of sea ice, acidification of the ocean, a drastic increase in unnaturally hot wildfires, and other horrendous, irreversible changes. Yet, timber provides a very small fraction of southeast Alaskas jobs less than 1 percent, according to the regional development organization Southeast Conference.

We cannot continue to dismantle the biosphere and not expect severe ramifications for the planet and all of its residents. Please drop this reckless plan.

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