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Organization:

Title:

Comments: NO ACTION Alternative

Dear Policymakers,

I am writing to you to give my whole hearted support for the No Action Alternative on the Roadless Rule.

The Roadless Rule of 2001 is working, and overwhelmingly popular in the nation, state, SE Alaska region, and locally in my hometown of Sitka.

I am a logger. I make my living from harvesting old growth. And I've lived in SE Alaska for almost 40 years, making my living largely from the Tongass for 25 years.

My family of 5 eats 99% of our protein from the Tongass and surrounding ocean. Most US families buy and eat beef-but my family exclusively harvests venison from Roadless areas of the Tongass National Forest. I have 3 sons, two who are teenagers. Our venison consumption is hundreds of pounds per year, as is our consumption of salmon and other fish that rely upon healthy, intact forests.

I understand the US Forest Service's mandate of multiple use, and I understand it from within the agency, as a public contact for USFS in the early 1990s speaking with upwards of 25,000 visitors a year. I am not opposed to logging.

I am opposed to exporting round logs to Asia. I am opposed to large tax payer subsidies-like the \$600 million in the last 20 years.

I support strong commercial and sport fisheries. I support a visitor industry. And as a logger myself, I support a small scale timber industry. One that priorities sawmills that mill less than a million board feet a year.

I've bought lumber from such mills for 30 years, and even ran my own for a short period in the 1990s. These mills provide real jobs and keep families going, and they support woodworkers and builders like me building homes in our region.

And we should be looking to the future to envision a timber industry that gets the most dollars per board foot. If we save large areas of old growth, there will be wood for the future.

As a craftsman and artist, for every board foot of salvaged lumber I log, I keep over ten dollars in the local economy. Compare that to 10 cents per board foot for the two large sawmills in SE Alaska, and even less for round log exporting.

Here's a simple fact, one that USFS numbers back: about half of the commercially viable old growth has already been logged on the Tongass. And what that number does not say is this: the vast majority of the easily logged timber has been logged.

I want my kids to be able to both enjoy all that old growth forests provide AND still have a viable small scale, sustainable timber industry.

The Tongass is on the front lines of climate change. Hundred of thousands of acres of the rare Alaska yellow

cedar have died within the 16.7 million acres of the Tongass. Just this year 300,000 acres of hemlock were distressed by the hemlock sawfly as a result of drought conditions. Large scale logging only exacerbates sawfly damage, as has been documented on the Tongass in past years.

There are so many compelling reasons to keep the Roadless Rule intact:

1. An overwhelming majority of Americans, Alaskans, and SE Alaskans are in favor of keeping the Roadless Rule.
2. Industrial scale logging is bad for tax payers.
3. Large scale logging wipes out fishery habitat.
4. Large scale logging hurts subsistence food harvesters, hunters, and fishermen.
5. Tourists want to see and experience wild, intact ecosystems.
6. And so, so much more.

Thank you for your time.

Zach LaPerriere

Sitka, Alaska

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