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Title:

Comments: Keep the roadless rule in place -- don't cut the Tongass

I urge your to keep the roadless rule in place. The scientists have spoken. The fishermen have spoken. The native villages have spoken and the tourist industries have spoken. We don't want to see our forest cut down.

I am certain that many of the commenters have told you about their many years living in Alaska and how important to their lives. My perspective is different, I only moved here 6 months ago. Which means there are many parts of Alaska I don't understand and there are others parts I see better because I have some distance. For most of my life I have lived around forests like the ones the -- very few -- advocates of logging advocate and I can tell you they simply are not the same. I have lived in the Olympics and seen the devastation left behind by clear cuts. I have lived in Michigan and walked through machine planted tree farms with their orderly stakes and I have in lived in the Sierra Nevadas. Nothing compares to this place with its miles and miles of uncut forest. There is no other place in the U.S. where you can see to end of your vision and spot neither a road nor a clear cut -- and it makes all the difference in the world.

If we cut the Tongass to please a tiny majority we will ruin that experience and kill the tourist industry. I know because I know what the tourists are seeking -- the last the frontier, the experience of the wild. You know because you know that in the lower 48 people need to hike further and deeper into the forest to get that sense of isolation and connection to nature. Changing this rule could destroy that experience and the tourist economy. If you want to see rain forest with clear cuts why not save a few dollars and see the Olympics instead? Why not explore Northern California and pocket a few dollars?

And of course the inherent value of nature, the beauty of the forest and the money it brings in are only a few of the many reasons to keep the roadless rule in place. You've already heard from the scientists have told us about the risks to salmon streams and about the threats to species that prefer old growth forests. You will listen to the voices of experience or you will listen to a tiny minority.

If we make this forest like the forests of the lower 48 we will destroy what makes it unique. Keep the Tongass wild. Don't destroy our forest.

Dan Aalbers

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