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First name: Kevin

Last name: Knox

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Support for Alternative 1 - No Action

I am writing as a resident of Sitka, also as an elected member of the City and Borough of Sitka Assembly. I support, along with a majority of elected officials in Sitka, NO Action on the Tongass Roadless Rule. I grew up in Sitka and the wilderness surrounding Southeast Alaska when my family moved here in 1973. It is my hope that the Tongass remains largely intact for many reasons and the biggest is for the future for my family and my community of Sitka and all other Southeast communities.

The sustainability of the future of Sitka's economy, the livelihoods of our citizens, the visitor industry and the commercial fishing industry are highly dependent on a pristine and productive natural setting throughout Southeast Alaska. Salmon populations are facing increased challenges from changing ocean conditions, climate change, ocean acidification, rising water temperatures in streams, and ocean warming events in the Pacific Ocean, and freshwater habitat development in the contiguous United States.

Of particular importance in Sitka and throughout Southeast Alaska the approximate combined economic value of Southeast Alaska's ports, including commercial fishing , tourism, recreation, scientific research, fisheries enhancement and community subsistence totals over \$2 billion annually. Southeast Alaska is the most visited region in Alaska, with two-thirds of all visitors to the State coming to this region and therefore acting as a significant contribution to the local and regional economy. Roadless areas on the Tongass are essential to Southeast Alaska's way of life and represent some of the most spectacular and unique roadless areas anywhere in the National Forest System that support hunting, fishing , customary and traditional uses, unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities, and opportunities for businesses.

For the Global environment the amount of carbon stored in the intact old growth forests and soils of the Tongass National Forest represent one of the highest carbon stores in the world, and the conservation of intact roadless areas and old growth forests on the Tongass are essential for maintaining local and national climate resilience and slowing down climate change throughout the world.

Increased logging of old growth forests in existing roadless areas would incur a significant cost to taxpayers, as new reports estimate that the subsidization of logging on the Tongass has cost taxpayers over \$600 million over the past twenty years, and the State of Alaska's own economic analysis states Tongass timber will be fundamentally uncompetitive on the world market.

Please take into consideration the overwhelming support that has been levied to the No Action alternative. Let the current rule stand and the process that has been in place this past decade remain as the tool for vetting potential development and projects in this incredible environment.

Kevin Knox

Sitka, AK 99835

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