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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Public Comment on Tongass National Forest and the Alaska Roadless Rule

Dear Agriculture Secretary Perdue and Forest Service Chief Christiansen,

I am writing to strongly urge you to pursue Alternative 1 (take no action and leave all of Alaska under the 2001 Roadless Rule, including the Tongass National Forest) at this point in time and NOT exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule.

Tongass National Forest, as a relatively roadless forest, provides great benefits including but not limited to:

- * Protects clean water sources and major watersheds;
- * Increases our resiliency to climate change through the capacity of trees and woodlands to store carbon;
- * Provides undisturbed places for hunting, fishing, and other recreation;
- * Safeguards habitat for a vast range of wildlife species including huge numbers of salmon;
- * Contributes significantly to the economy via the above, impacting both our seafood and tourism economy--both significant in the U.S.A and critically important in Alaska.

Should the Forest Service want to explore eliminating roadless area protections in the Tongass, that should proceed with a thorough environmental review based on science and thoughtful deliberation*--not because the Governor of Alaska asked the President to find a way to exempt the Tongass from the roadless rule. The administration is undercutting the important role of sound science in agency decision-making and harming the credibility of the Forest Service as a responsible land steward-credibility that the agency has worked for decades to build.

As a child, I was introduced to the Forest Service first through Woodsy the Owl and then through Forest Rangers as I hiked national forests. The Forest Service has represented thoughtful education and stewardship--and taught me that watching out for our natural resources is a burden shared by all, myself included, not just the Forest Service.

It is as that land and resources steward that I write to you now. Alternative 1 is clearly the best course of action to take at this point in time and I strongly urge you to NOT exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule.

Thank you for considering this important input.

Sincerely,

Audrey Clarke

*Note: In an article in The Hill, it was reported that an independent group's study indicated "that timber sales in the Tongass have resulted in taxpayer losses of nearly \$600 million over the past two decades because the costs incurred by the Forest Service to administer its timber sales program have far receipts generated from

the resulting sales.' This same group predicts that those losses would keep climbing without the Roadless Rule, due to the high, taxpayer-subsidized cost of building and maintaining roads in such remote areas." This is not worth the risk to our watersheds, our resiliency to climate change, wildlife habitat, as well as our seafood and tourism economies.

[Position]