

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/17/2019 9:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: HC5043

Subject: Comments on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS

As an Alaskan public servant and policy maker I offer comments supporting selection of Alternative 6 (full exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule) of the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS notice in October 17, 2019 in the Federal Register. Having talked with many residents here in Alaska I believe the roadless rule:

-is stifling development of an adequate infrastructure in SE Alaska including an adequate transportation system, power development and transmission, communications and new and existing business opportunities.

--is increasing costs somewhere between 20-100% to maintain, replace or upgrade existing structures. The major burden of those costs are being places on residents of the municipalities in the form of rapidly rising service fees. SE Alaska is losing population putting greater tax burden on fewer people.

-Inhibits the normal planning process and exempting the Tongass would allow the normal land planning and management decisions to resume and hopefully reduce the time it takes to make a decision. Millions have been spent on developing the Tongass Land Management Plan under the auspices of the National Forest Management Act. Removing the Roadless Rules would put the plan back in the forefront for management decisions.

-places many unwritten rules on residents and managers alike when considering new opportunities for local businesses and new start-ups.

Releasing the 9.2 million acres from the Roadless Rule restrictions would not make much difference in the use of the forest as has been stated in several opinion pieces in Alaska media. However, it would return management to the NFMA planning process in place before the exemption that most people know and understand. And it would provide managers and users a direct way to use the Forest Plan whereby removing Gray areas.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Position]