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USDA Forest Service

Attn: Alaska Roadless Rule

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Juneau AK 99802

Delivered by USPS and Email

To Whom It May Concern: I have recently become aware of plans by the USDA to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Alaska Roadless Rule. I urge you to choose Alternative 1, which would take no action and leave all of Alaska under the 2001 Roadless Rule, including the Tongass National Forest. According to an article published by Earthjustice, the Tongass is home to nearly one-third of the earth's old-growth temperate rainforest. Some of the old-growth trees are older than the United States itself. These amazing trees have a massive potential to combat climate change by "breathing out" oxygen. According to some conservation scientists, the Tongass alone traps billions of tons of carbon, keeping the element out of our atmosphere.

As a longtime resident of Florida 60+years, I have witnessed the unrelenting development of my community. Yes, everyone wants to relocate to a sunny environment and live along the coast. But the long term effect has been catastrophic in many ways. Our local fish population has dwindled because the breeding grounds have been replaced by condominiums. Large mammals such as bears, panthers, bobcats in deer are a customer site in my residential neighborhood, which is about 20 minutes from the beach. Habitat is being eliminated at an alarming rate.

In closing, I would like to note that I have finally been able to retire and enjoy our country's national parks and monuments. My wife and I visited the Tongass National Forest this summer and were amazed by the beauty and serenity of the old-growth timber forest. Our national parks should be maintained for the benefit of all, not to be plundered by loving in special interests. I wholeheartedly support the "NO ACTION" alternative in the current roadless designations for all of Alaska.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Keith Orschell

[Position]