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Organization:

Title:

Comments: HC5115

U.S. Forest Service Alaska Roadless Rule Committee:

The Roadless Rule has worked for over 20 years. It has already been through the public process. In 200, 95% of the over 1.6 million people who commented, supported strong protections for roadless areas. Public comments in 2018 and 2019 also overwhelmingly supported retaining the Rule in Alaska.

The Roadless Rule strikes the right balance by allowing energy, infrastructure and other development activities. All 58 applications for development activities in Tongass Roadless Areas have been granted. The approval process is quick.

According to the Taxpayers for Common Sense, the USFS could lose more than \$180 million in the Tongass over next four years. Congressional sources already note the Tongass road maintenance backlog at roughly \$68 million. Also, the Tongass already has more than 5,000 miles of permanent logging roads transecting its landscape for access to timber. Currently, there are more than 1,200 places on the Tongass where the roads don't allow fish to migrate. Removing the Roadless Rule is bad economics.

The Tongass is our largest national forest and part of the largest remaining intact temperate rainforest in the world, with unique plants, animals and fish found in vast and sustainable numbers. It produces more salmon than all other national forests combined, and produces 80% of the salmon harvested on the national forest system. It is a national treasure.

Roadless areas and places like the Tongass 77 contain highly-productive fish habitat critical to local fishing and tourism industries, which power a more than \$2 billion industry and support more than a quarter of the region's jobs-annually!

Please do not roll back roadless area protections.

Sincerely,

BP Casbara

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