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First name: DIANE

Last name: KASTEL

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Trump administration announced plans today for a massive timber sale that would destroy more than 5,100 acres of critical old-growth habitat in the "Tongass National Forest" in Southeast Alaska.

Shame on the Trump administration's "Forest Service" for having the gall to continue to burden, and, overwhelm, Southeast Alaskans with yet another needless, greedy, and, money-losing timber sale when we are in the midst of a pandemic, and, a controversial Alaska "Roadless Rulemaking" process," said Dan Cannon, "Tongass Forest" program manager for "Southeast Alaska Conservation Council". "As Alaskans await Secretary Perdue's decision on the "Roadless Rule", they will yet again have to advocate for the protection of critical old-growth habitat in their backyards! We don't know how many times we need to say it: Timber only contributes 1% to Southeast Alaska's economy, while the fishing and, tourism, industries contribute 26%! Stop making Southeast Alaskans' lives more difficult by threatening our true economic drivers."

The "U.S. Forest Service"'s draft environmental impact statement for the "South Revilla" timber sale proposes chain-sawing 5,115 acres of old-growth forest near Ketchika! It also would allow bulldozing, or, rebuilding, more than 80 miles of damaging logging roads, costing taxpayers \$11 million!

"This assault on America's largest rainforest will destroy important habitat for salmon, bears, and, wolves, and, worsen the climate crisis," said Randi Spivak, public lands director at the "Center for Biological Diversity". "Clear-cutting the "Tongass", and, wiping out enormous carbon stores is like cutting off part of the planet's oxygen supply. It's mind-boggling that the Trump administration wants to decimate this spectacular old-growth forest, and, erase one of the solutions to averting catastrophic climate change."

This project, and, the proposed elimination of the "Roadless Area Conservation Rule" on the "Tongass" are part of the Trump administration's relentless efforts to clear-cut large swaths of remaining old-growth across the national forest, consistent with its policy of increasing logging nationwide!

"As forests across the Americas burn, the last thing we need to do is destroy old-growth forests in the "Tongass Rainforest", one of the United States' best defenses against furthering the climate crisis," said Osprey Oreille Lake, executive director for the "Women's Earth and Climate Action Network" ("WECAN"). "Existing within the territories of the Tlingit, Haida, and, Tsimshian peoples, the "Tongass" is a vital ecosystem necessary to the traditional life-ways of local Indigenous communities. Destroying critical old growth in the "Tongass" not only devastates wildlife habitat, and, harms the climate, but, disregards the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, and, further perpetuates modern genocidal policies! We must stand together for our forests, communities, and, the climate."

The roughly 17 million-acre "Tongass" is the largest national forest in the United States. Since time immemorial it has been the traditional homelands of the Tlingit, Haida, and, Tsimshian peoples. Alaska Natives rely on the area for culture, traditional hunting, fishing, and, livelihoods. People from around the world visit the "Tongass" for world-class recreation, wildlife watching, sport, and, commercial fishing.

"It was just over two months ago that a federal judge threw out the largest logging project we've seen in decades because the "Forest Service" failed to provide communities with basic information like where it intended to log," said Olivia Glasscock, an attorney at "Earthjustice". "Nevertheless, the agency is back again with twin proposals for timber sales targeting irreplaceable old-growth trees in the same cherished national forest! Urgent action is needed to address the climate crisis, and, that includes efforts to preserve the magnificent trees that absorb carbon! Unfortunately, these destructive logging plans will only make the problem worse."

The "Tongass" is the largest intact temperate rainforest left on Earth, and, provides vital habitat for eagles, bears, wolves, salmon, birds, and, countless other species. It is a globally recognized carbon sink, and, helps to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change, storing approximately 8% of the total carbon stored in all national forests!

"Alaska Rainforest Defenders" asked, plain, and, simple in their September, 2018, scoping comments on the "South Revilla" project, that the "Forest Service" drop the timber part of the project," said "Alaska Rainforest Defenders", spokesman, Larry Edwards. "As with our recently successful lawsuit against the timber component of the "POWLLA" project, environmentalists have no complaints over the non-timber components of this project. In the "DEIS", all of the alternatives for the project are estimated to have a timber sale value appraised at a loss to taxpayers, which means that, legally, a timber sale could not be offered! Continuing to a final "EIS" would be gambling with millions of dollars of "Forest Service" planning effort at taxpayer expense."

Logging the "Tongass" has been tremendously costly for taxpayers. A new report estimates that timber sales from the forest have cost taxpayers \$1.7 billion over four decades!

"Despite a commitment to move away from unsustainable old-growth timber sales, the "U.S. Forest Service" continues to offer these sales in the "Tongass National Forest," said Nicole Whittington-Evans, Alaska program director for "Defenders of Wildlife". "More clear-cutting will damage the real drivers of southeast Alaska's economy: fish, wildlife, and, tourism. "Defenders" won't stand by, and, watch as the administration despoils irreplaceable wildlife habitat, and, threatens sustainable jobs, and, livelihoods, in southeast Alaska."