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Title:

Comments: Objection to the Tongass Roadless Exemption

Dear Alaska Forest Service,

I am an outdoor recreation enthusiast writing to express my strong objection to the decision by the USDA Forest Service to roll back the protections of the Roadless Rule for the Tongass National Forest. The Tongass has tremendous value for climate protection and outdoor recreation in the region, and it also provides clean water, clean air, and wildlife habitat, all of which are foundational to the economic and ecological health of Southeast Alaska. Road building, logging, and development should be prohibited in the Tongass's roadless areas to preserve outdoor recreation opportunities and protect clean water and wildlife and the economic activity that depends on them.

The Roadless Rule was created after a lot of public outreach. It's a popular and sensible approach to land management.

The federal Roadless Rule should remain in place in Alaska, and all current roadless areas in the state should remain protected. I am deeply angered by this decision, which is not in the best interests of our country or the state of Alaska.

As opponents have long argued, stripping the Tongass of these vital protections would obstruct access to clean water, hurt Indigenous communities, and turn what is now one of our best weapons against climate change into a climate disaster. With its high density of old-growth trees, which are more efficient at capturing carbon than younger trees, the Tongass is crucial to decelerating global warming; according to the Washington Post, the Tongass's trees "absorb at least 8 percent of all the carbon stored in the entire Lower 48's forests combined." "While tropical rainforests are the lungs of the planet, the Tongass is the lungs of North America," Dominick DellaSala, chief scientist with the Earth Island Institute's Wild Heritage project, told the Post. "It's America's last climate sanctuary."

Sincerely,

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