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Comments: In 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) to preserve and protect nationally significant public land in Alaska for present and future generations-and by extension, preserving environmental integrity from development. By that time, unauthorized cabins had been constructed on federal lands, inside and outside areas ANILCA subsequently designated as Wilderness.

Directed by ANILCA, in 1987 the U.S Forest Service created a program that issued special-use permits for these unauthorized cabins. These permits were renewable every five years and nontransferable, terminating upon the death of the last immediate family member of the original claimant. The intent was to phase out these cabins, nowhere more important than in Wilderness, which is managed for its wildness. Though spanning decades, it was a fair way of treating cabin owners. However, the Forest Service has recently tabled removing these restrictions. This is absurd.

Such a proposal goes against the intent and purpose of ANILCA. At a time when climate change, overdevelopment, pollution, threats from fossil fuel exploitation, and numerous other examples of human-caused negative impacts on our natural world have put our wildlife, our biodiversity, and our natural national heritage at risk, reneging on your responsibility to ANILCA flies in the face of what we need to do to preserve and protect our wilderness. It is wrongheaded and counterproductive. The proper phase-out of these cabins-unauthorized to begin with-is what needs to happen.