

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/16/2024 4:00:00 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for listening to the people and businesses who requested that the USDA drop the language in the Notice of Intent that effectively exempted the Tongass National Forest from the same protections afforded to other forests. Unfortunately, I do not believe that the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS provides adequate protections.

The updated language in the preferred alternative is ambiguous about allowable logging. I'm concerned that this leaves room for exploitation and large-scale commercial logging of old-growth. I believe the language should be more about exceptions to allow the Tongass to be more protected.

Protection of the Tongass National Forest should be a top priority. The Tongass is our largest National Forest and greatest carbon sink. Due to its low temperatures and high annual rainfall, the Tongass is at low risk for wildfire, so it has a high likelihood of permanence and will continue to trap and store carbon in perpetuity.

Larger-scale commercial logging endangers fish and wildlife habitats, including:

* All five species of Pacific salmon, whose spawning is impacted by stream health, which is impacted by the health of the forest around it,

* Sitka blacktail deer numbers have suffered in Prince of Wales because of the impacts of logging across the Island.

Larger-scale commercial logging would negatively impact cultural and recreational uses, including hunting, fishing and foraging.

Please consider revising the language used to provide protection to the Tongass for the current residents of Southeast Alaska, the future generations, and for America.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ella Sherrill

Resident of Ketchikan, Alaska