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Comments: Thank you for listening to Southeast Alaska Tribes, municipalities and small business owners 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, the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS still does not provide adequate protections.

With the purpose of the National Old Growth Amendment to conserve old-growth forest conditions and recruit new old-growth in response to climate change, protection of the Tongass National Forest should be a top priority as 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.

As a longtime resident of Southeast Alaska, it is personally important to me that the Tongass remain standing today and long into the future. Thank you.