

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/24/2025 9:00:00 AM

First name: Robert

Last name: Vernon

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to you today regarding a the Tongass Draft Assessment findings

Dear Tongass Plan Revision,

I worked in the Tongass two years as a school teacher and principal, one month as a thinner, one summer as an ADF&G biologist and fished halibut and salmon commercially. The clearcuts that I have seen are a tragedy to thousands of years of soil accumulation ate a tragedy as much of it is washing downstream in persistent rains. Muddy streams inhibit salmon reproduction. There is no doubt in my mind that most of the roadless Tongans should be kept intact, that many of the trees are the best carbon sink in multiple ways and that Tlingit villages should be given authority over the lands surrounding their villages.

I have been to every town in SE Alaska and am enamored of the way of life it provides. Logging cleavers are a blight on a beautiful natural world and way of life.

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining an intact, healthy Tongass National Forest through the upcoming Revision Plan, and for specific components of the draft assessment centered around this goal. A well-preserved Tongass is essential to my health, the health of the people and the health of the planet.

The draft assessment highlights several priority areas for me personally that are also areas which require robust protection, including:

- Homelands, sacred places, and traditional harvesting grounds of Alaska Native people
- Subsistence - both customary and traditional uses
- The temperate rainforest archipelago and ecosystems
- Salmon runs and other wildlife habitat
- Recreation and scenic beauty

I share in the draft plan's endorsement of stronger protections for these areas and encourage the Forest Service to retain limits on new roads.

The inclusion of protections for small timber mill operators is also extremely important to include in the Forest Plan Revision. Small timber mills have helped create and sustain communities across Southeast Alaska but are often outbid, forced out of timber sales that they depend on by larger mills.

Many Southeast Alaskans want to see meaningful change in the timber industry, and the entire region would directly benefit from the transition away from archaic clear cutting to truly sustainable logging practices.

Thank you for considering my input. I urge you to prioritize Tongass protections in this forest plan revision.

Sincerely,

Mr Robert Vernon