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Comments:

It is my understanding that the U.S. Forest Service has begun a planning process to kick-start the largest old-growth logging project in the U.S. in recent history, and is considering a state petition to exempt the national forests in Alaska from the federal roadless rule.

I deeply oppose both actions.

I was fortunate enough to visit Tongass in July 2003, and it is an experience I will not forget for the remainder of my life. Given how few humans will actually benefit from the proposed clear-cutting (euphemistically called "resource development") and how much damage will be done to the ecosystem and the surrounding biosphere, the minimal economic justification for the proposed project is far outweighed by environmental, and, frankly, ethical concerns concerning its costs.

We don't need more taxpayer subsidized roads to nowhere in Alaska, and we certainly don't need them running right through the heart of its iconic coastal rainforest. It's time to stop trying to turn back the clock to a time of unchecked clearcutting, and focus instead on building a long-term future for Southeast Alaska that supports sustainable industries like tourism, recreation and fishing. The Tongass is the crown jewel of our National Forest System. It is a destination for tourism, fishing and outdoor recreation, and home to some of the last stands of temperate old-growth forest in the world. Old-growth forests and their ability to store carbon remain an important and under-recognized tool in the battle to combat climate change. Undoing roadless rule protections would put at risk millions of acres of national forest in the Tongass and cost taxpayers millions in the process.

I support the no-action alternative, that is, the continuation of current management of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska in accordance with the 2001 Roadless Rule.