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Comments:

I oppose this Alaska state-specific version of the Roadless Rule which is a blatant gift to a couple of timber companies that will mire the U.S. Forest Service in unprecedented, costly and needless controversy for years to come. The Tongass and Chugach forests are treasured natural resources that should be valued and protected from the destruction of logging! This is the first step down a path that will force U.S. taxpayers to expand their subsidy of the Tongass timber program with tens of millions of dollars every year.

"The protection of old-growth forests in the wildlands of Southeast Alaska is essential for the region's tourism, recreation and fishing industries, which account for more than 35 times the number of jobs than the small but destructive timber industry. Allowing logging in these wildlands will make a bad situation worse. U.S. taxpayers are already being forced to pay millions for an industrial logging program that contributes less than 1 percent in total employment-related earnings to the region."

"The existing Roadless Rule also protects areas of vital importance to Alaska Natives across the region. By ensuring clear-cut logging does not destroy these areas, the Rule protects fish and wildlife habitat for vital subsistence uses, customary and traditional cultural venues, and sacred spiritual sites. It also ensures that areas that are vital for Southeast Alaska's thriving tourism industry as well as commercial fishing, sport hunting and fishing, and recreation, remain off limits to logging. These sustainable industries are Alaska's future. They have long surpassed industrial-scale logging as the region's main economic drivers, and they depend on healthy watersheds and wildlands of the Tongass and the Chugach."