

Date submitted (Alaskan Standard Time): 10/15/2018 8:23:47 PM

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Comments:

I live, work, and play in the Tongass and request to leave the roadless rule intact. As a employee in the tourist industry my livelihood depends on having roadless wilderness necessary to support the wild creatures that visitors will pay to see. Right now the tourist industry has brought tens of thousands of visitors to the Tongass National Forest. Removing protections for these forests would be a net negative for me personally and for the entire tourist industry that markets the wilderness. While the tourism industry and all the additional visitors has brought real impacts and challenges to the forest (and these impacts need to be addressed), the impacts pale in comparison to the damage of road building and subsequent logging. Unfortunately, while the forest service debates and spends it budget on subsidizing one dying industry (at the expense of a flourishing one) the Forest Service has an enormous backlog of requests for additional permitting and regulation from the tourism providers. The tourism industry has requested support from the Forest Service to develop licenses and permits and address the impacts of all of the additional users. But at the same time the Forest Service is using its budget to develop the rules and regulations to develop rules that would benefit logging and hurt tourism. The Tongass represents some of the last wilderness on the planet, and while there are millions of acres of roaded forest suitable for logging there is only a small percentage of roadless forest. Adding roads will irrevocably destroy these special areas and should not be considered lightly.