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First name: Lauryn

Last name: Jones

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

My name is Lauryn Nanouk Jones and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I have only been in Southeast Alaska for a short time, less than four months. But no matter where you go the land it is vital to the people who inhabit the land. Forests are whole ecosystems and they are essential to all of life. I have been around forests all throughout my life. My family depends on them to get animals and plants that we use as food and home remedies. I value all the life in the forest and the trees that are giving us oxygen, that is essential for all of life. I am writing a comment on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS because I am concerned with how the Rule and the proposed full exemption will impact my the peace and solitude I find in nature, fishing, hunting, subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the conservation of resources for future generations the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts.

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. It protects important fish and wildlife habitat from clearcutting and roadbuilding. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for healthy fish habitat, viewing wildlife, carbon sequestration, and local climate change mitigation, recreating and enjoying nature, foraging and gathering wild foods, keeping public lands wild for future generations. A full exemption does not protect these values, nor does it effectively balance economic development and conservation of roadless area characteristics. A full exemption from the Roadless Rule and increased logging and roadbuilding will negatively impact the Tongass and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass. I want the roadless areas in these locations to stay in roadless status in any alternative selected by the Forest Service, and be managed to provide for the uses and activities I listed above. It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support the Forest Services preferred alternative of a full exemption. A full exemption is not in the interests of Southeast Alaskans who live in and use the Tongass National Forest, because It doesn't take account of all the people who spoke out in support of the no-action alternative. Everybody deserves to have a voice and a full exemption neglects the people who live in the Tongass national forest or live near it. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

It would further harm rural economic opportunities because pursuing the same outdated economic model of old-growth clearcut harvesting for export stifles innovation and possibility in other sectors, such as mariculture, sustainable young-growth harvest, and rural agriculture. If the Forest Service wants to support rural economic development, they should devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries.

I urge the Forest Service to prioritize the voices of Southeast Alaskans over those of our political representation and corporate interests. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long-lasting, durable solution for roadless areas on the Tongass. It will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict on the Tongass going forward.