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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

My name is Nissa Rudh and I live in Corvallis, OR. 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 affect the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest.

I am a biologist who spends a great deal of time outdoors. Unfortunately, being a biologist, I also have the misfortune of understanding many of the ecological travesties that take place all around me. Take a quick stroll through a city park on a sunny day? I see a sea of invasive species overgrown and more non-native plants used as landscaping. Roadtrip? I see how much of the world has been disturbed, altered, and destroyed for short-term profit. A hike deep in the national forest? I see the scars of logging left in the forms of gigantic stumps when I maybe was thinking, "oh, these trees are really big". In essence, it is difficult to see the world through the eyes which are raw to the responsibility that we lack.

I am writing today in support of Alternative I and, in essence, no need for an EIS. This is an impact that we, as a nation cannot bear. While priorities are often set on a congressional level, it does not take a rocket scientist to tell us why protecting our oldest and most biodiverse forests might be a good idea. I want our country to make decisions based in scientific fact and keep what little old growth we have left. Money is not everything. In fact, I would say that the stuff has very little intrinsic value, while the unlogged areas of the Tongass have more intrinsic value than I can express with words.

I urge the Forest Service to select Alternative 1, the no action alternative, for the final decision on the Alaska Roadless Rule. This alternative protects the inventoried roadless areas in Alaska that are full of pristine wilderness and provide important fish and wildlife habitat, and already allows for important community and economic development projects. As an American citizen, I value the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest for the high density of incredible wildlife it contains, its status as America's best natural solution to climate change and its sequestering of millions of metric tons of carbon and mitigating climate change, its status as a national and global treasure. A full exemption does not protect these priorities, nor does it effectively balance economic development with the countless other benefits provided by roadless areas. I would like the Forest Service to manage roadless areas for passive/active watershed restoration (stream and habitat) to improve/maintain roadless characteristics (culvert removal/replacement, improve fish passage, wildlife thinning, etc), low-impact recreation (camping, hiking, hunting, foraging, etc). It is important to me that high-value intact habitat including the T77 watersheds and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections in any alternative selected.

The Forest Service is wasting taxpayers' valuable time and money by trying to prop up a failing timber industry in Southeast Alaska. The nonpartisan, independent taxpayer watchdog Taxpayers for Common Sense reported that the Tongass timber program has losses of over \$600 million of taxpayers money in the past 20 years. I would rather see my taxpayer dollars used to restore salmon habitat that was hurt by past logging practices, establish the economic value of the carbon stored in the Tongass. We need to stop subsidizing the clearcutting of old growth on the Tongass through taxpayer funded roadbuilding. If a full exemption were chosen, it would not create opportunities and would instead prioritize the special interests of one industry over the interests of the entire American public.

The Tongass is Americas homegrown natural solution to climate change. The forest sequesters 8% of the carbon stored in forests throughout the contiguous US states, some 3 billion metric tons of it. We must take action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and maintaining the Tongass in a roadless state is critical for a sustainable future.

I urge the Forest Service to listen to the voices of the American people and prioritize them over corporate interests. The Forest Service should strengthen public involvement in developing land management policy and focus on broadly supported work rather than allowing special corporate interests to guide policy changes. Attempting to exempt inventoried roadless areas on the Chugach National Forest from the Alaska Roadless Rule adds further insult to injury, and this proposal has not received any sufficient environmental impact analysis or public input. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless

areas in Alaska it will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict over these forests going forward.