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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

My name is Kevin Maier and I live in Juneau, AK. I have called Juneau home since summer of 2004. Like many, I was drawn here by fish, wild animals, mountains, and the spectacular access to world class recreational opportunity. 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 fishing, hunting, and the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure. Perhaps more importantly, the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts will be compromised if this exemption is granted.

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. The rule is working fine as it is by balancing the conservation of our fish and wildlife habitat with important development projects. As a fishing guide, I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for my economic livelihood. I believe we need to keep 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 Admiralty Island, Yakutat forelands. 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. The effort to return to old growth, clear-cut logging announced by this ill-advised attempt to exempt the Tongass from the roadless rule marks a step backward, toward a way of being that is fundamentally incompatible with the current economic drivers in the region. 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 transition to second growth logging, while also investing in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure.

Listen to Southeast Alaskans on this one. We know what's best for our backyard.

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. .