

Date submitted (Alaskan Standard Time): 12/12/2019 12:00:00 AM

First name: Stephen

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Organization: Green Mountain Club

Title:

Comments:

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christensen,

Please select the "no-action" alternative on the Alaska-specific Roadless Rule and protect all inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest under the 2001 National Roadless Rule.

The Tongass contains some of the last remaining intact old-growth temperate rainforests in the world, and its value in providing endless recreation opportunities, clean water, and fish and wildlife habitat is essential to the economic, cultural, and ecological health of Southeast Alaska. I urge you to keep the 2001 National Roadless Rule intact and current protections in place on the Tongass National Forest.

The Roadless Rule is among the smartest and most popular land management policies the Federal Government has ever adopted. Not only does it preserve that pristine habitat, but it also saves untold millions of taxpayer dollars that might otherwise be spent to subsidize money-losing timber sales. The value of the Roadless Rule in preventing environmentally damaging and economically wasteful road-building and logging is particularly relevant in the Tongass, where logging costs vastly exceed timber revenues and require unsustainable taxpayer subsidies.

Lastly, the 2001 National Roadless Rule is well designed and flexible enough to allow for access and development projects. Since 2009 48 projects have been approved in the Tongass, the majority relating to surface exploration of potential mining and hydropower. The USFS has also taken steps to expedite this approval process, now taking only one to three weeks for the Tongass National Forest.

For these reasons, again, I strongly urge you to select the "no-action" alternative on the Alaska-specific Roadless Rule and keep the 2001 National Roadless Rule on the Tongass.

Thank you Stephen Bailey Montpelier VT