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Title:

Comments:

I don't live in Alaska but what happens there WILL affect me. And everyone else on this planet.

The lifting of the 2001 Roadless Rule in regards to the Tongass National Forests opens the area to:

* catastrophic disruption of the people, their communities and livelihoods who depend on the current protections

* permanent losses for Alaskan fishermen - 80% of commercial salmon harvested come from waters in the Tongass, and the fishing industry provides 10% of the jobs in southeast Alaska vs the timber industry's 1% percent;

* devastation of the area's tourism industry which currently contributes more than \$1 billion annually to the region each year and provides 15% of employment (vs the timber industry's 1% percent) and thrives due to the protections given by the 2001 Roadless Rule;

* imperilment of the beauty of some of the most remarkable and fragile ecosystems on the planet as well as already endangered wildlife species, their habitat and migration corridors;

* the fact that the timber industry and its chunk of the economy is already in its natural twilight - something even industry experts concede;

* cost to the Forest Service - the proposed logging of old-growth trees in the Tongass is so uneconomical that they would make back less than a dime for every dollar spent;

* cost to the taxpayer - who stand to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in the coming years from the few planned timber sales in the Tongass;

* infringement of the rights of the indigenous people who have an entitlement to the land that FAR exceeds those of these logging profiteers;

* erosion and flooding due to the removal of the forest root system further exacerbating many of these problems;

* air pollution from construction and corporate operations in such a rape of the Tongass will greatly increase respiratory health problems in the area

* poisoning of drinking water / aquifers on which people throughout southern Alaska depend due to leaching of toxic chemicals that are inherent in logging operations;

* damage and devastation from construction of roads and infrastructure and the operating of heavy equipment on the lands and waters of the forest and in communities downstream using the aquifers into which Tongass waters drain;

* the virtual impossibility to clean up such damage in our lifetime due to Alaska's short growing period;

* acceleration of climate change due to ever-escalating release of methane currently trapped in the northern permafrost as commercialization of the Tongass bumps up the global warming process.

The only people who benefit are the executives who will make their millions and disappear leaving the people of Alaska to clean up the mess and the politicians whose campaigns are being funded by these same executives.

Let's focus on the greatest good for the greatest NUMBER of people and stop this now; stand firm on the 2001 rule.

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