

Date submitted (Alaskan Standard Time): 12/15/2019 12:00:00 AM

First name: Stuart

Last name: Cohen

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

To Whom it May Concern,

Re: Tongass Forest Exemption from Roadless Rule

I am very much for retaining the Roadless Rule in the Tongass.

I am a 37 year resident of Alaska, own a home here, raised my family here and have no intention of leaving. I have been following this issue since I came to the state in 1982, and while there have been some positive developments, many of the fundamentals have not changed. It's frustrating to write the same letter once again.

Logging is still a parasitic, heavily subsidized industry that can't stand on its own two feet. Never could in Alaska, never will. We've been spending \$30,000,000-40,000,000 per year propping up this industry; over a billion dollars since I arrived in Southeast. We've got nothing to show for it except some aging loggers, slowly recovering salmon streams and a legacy of ugly clearcuts. There is no reason to try to keep this sham going; it would be better economics to pay the remaining 150 loggers \$60,000 per year NOT to log. They'd be safer from injuries and the taxpayers would save about \$20,000,000 per year. As a businessman and a taxpayer, I resent that my taxes have been used to destroy some of the last old-growth forest on earth. Additionally, the tourism value of a Roadless Tongass is far higher than its value as clearcuts.

I am well acquainted with the studied lie that claims that only a small part of the Tongass would be logged. They've been using that one since 1982. In reality, the parts slated for logging are a huge portion of the last large old-growth trees left, regardless of what the land mass is. I am all for logging and building roads on the 30% of the Tongass that is rock and ice. Then I guess I can go around telling people that road-building and logging is allowed in fully 30% of the Tongass, so it's all good. If you're going to exempt the Tongass from the Roadless Rule, that would be the best place to start.

Furthermore, as a person with children, I am aware of the Tongass's important role as a carbon sink, and I do not want to see one more element of our increasingly doubtful salvation be degraded. Climate change is real, and the Tongass, like the Amazon, has an important role to play. Future generations deserve to have this one remaining jewel intact, unlike the vast forest resources which have been liquidated one tree at a time in the Lower 48.

Important civic projects like power interties and even mining have adequate ability to access the Tongass under the present rules. Please keep the Roadless rule in place.

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