

Proposed by:	Mayor Cremata
Attorney Review:	10/16/2019
Vote:	5 Aye 0 Nay 1 Absent

MUNICIPALITY OF SKAGWAY, ALASKA
RESOLUTION NO. 19-32R

A RESOLUTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF SKAGWAY, ALASKA EXPRESSING THE MUNICIPALITY OF SKAGWAY'S SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE 1 OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS WITHIN THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST.

WHEREAS, the community of Skagway is highly dependent on tourism as its main economic driver; and

WHEREAS, tourism in Skagway, the Inside Passage, and the broader region of Southeast Alaska is dependent on maintaining pristine, wild landscapes of the surrounding coastal temperate rainforest and the iconic wildlife it supports; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) finalized a management plan for the Tongass National Forest, which includes the National Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule) in response to disappearing wildlands and a road maintenance backlog of \$8.4 billion; and

WHEREAS, the intent of the Roadless Rule was to protect the social, economic, and ecological values and characteristics of inventoried roadless areas from road construction and reconstruction and certain timber harvest activities; and

WHEREAS, at the time of promulgation in 2001, the Roadless Rule had the most extensive public involvement of any rulemaking process in the history of federal rulemaking, generating over 1.6 million comments, the vast majority of which supported the creation of a strong national policy protecting roadless areas; and

WHEREAS, inventoried roadless areas provide large, relatively undisturbed blocks of important habitat for a variety of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife and plants; contribute to healthy watersheds and clean drinking water; and provide extensive opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism; and

WHEREAS, the Roadless Rule protects some of the last remaining tracts of old-growth forest habitat in the Tongass that contribute to the absorption of global warming pollution and protect native animal species that rely on them; and

WHEREAS, roadless areas support subsistence lifestyles through hunting and fishing, and support outdoor recreation and tourism industries; and

WHEREAS, the Roadless Rule contains a variety of exceptions that allow roadbuilding for community access, hydropower projects, utility connectors, and other economic development projects when they serve a legitimate public interest; and

WHEREAS, protection of these roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest is of local and national importance; and

**MUNICIPALITY OF SKAGWAY
RESOLUTION NO. 19-32R
PAGE 2 OF 2**

WHEREAS, in 2018, the State of Alaska petitioned the USDA to craft a state-specific roadless rule and requested that a full exemption be pursued from the 2001 Roadless Rule; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the USDA accepted the State of Alaska's petition and initiated a National Environmental Policy Act review, an environmental impact statement (EIS), and public rulemaking process to address the management of inventoried roadless areas within Alaska, and to evaluate the exemption set forth in the petition. The USDA rulemaking is administrative and separate from any action Congress may take; and

WHEREAS, the majority of comments received by the USDA following its notice of intent of proposed rulemaking opposed changing the Roadless Rule for Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the draft EIS provides an analysis of six alternatives related to roadless management in Alaska, ranging from no action to a full exemption from the Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the USDA has identified Alternative 6, which is a full exemption, as the preferred alternative at this time; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Skagway opposes Alternative 6 and feels that Alternative 1, which requests no action and would maintain the 2001 Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest, best protects public interests while also protecting the unique ecosystem of the Tongass; and

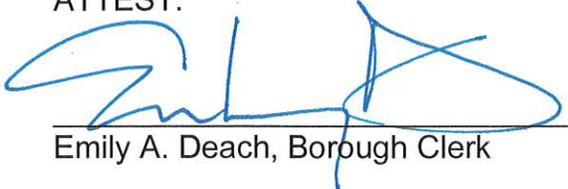
WHEREAS, the USDA is seeking public comment on the draft EIS from October 18, 2019 to December 17, 2019 and will issue its decision regarding and Alaska Roadless Rule in June of 2020;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Skagway Borough Assembly expresses its opposition to Alternative 6, and its support for Alternative 1 of the draft environmental impact statement for the management of inventoried roadless areas within the Tongass National Forest.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the Borough Assembly of the Municipality of Skagway this 24th day of October, 2019.



Andrew Cremata, Mayor

ATTEST:


Emily A. Deach, Borough Clerk

(SEAL)

