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Trump ready to roll back protections for 9 million acres in America's largest national forest

Rolling back Roadless Rule protections paves the way for a new wave of logging in the Tongass

Washington — Today, the U.S. Forest Service released a final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for an Alaska-specific Roadless Rule, advancing its proposal to eliminate the Roadless Rule for the Tongass National Forest and open millions of acres of irreplaceable old-growth temperate rainforest to clearcut logging.

Clearcutting old-growth forests compromises our public lands, fragments wildlife habitat, destroys salmon runs and pollutes drinking water. Opening up Tongass roadless areas to road building and logging would threaten the abundant wildlife and beautiful scenery essential to tourism in Southeast Alaska, an industry that contributes more than \$1 billion to the region each year. It would also endanger the region's commercial fishing industry, another billion-dollar industry that relies on streams and rivers of the Tongass to produce 80% of its salmon harvest. Together, these two industries along account for more than 25% of all regional employment.

Statement from Andy Moderow, Alaska Director, Alaska Wilderness League:

“The Tongass is where many Americans come to see Alaska, to experience abundant wildlife in an intact, wild landscape. But instead of addressing maintenance backlogs and permitting issues that would benefit tourism and recreation, or stream restoration that would boost Southeast Alaska's billion-dollar fishing industry and protect long standing Alaskan traditions, this administration has opted to take the road well-traveled by continuing to spend tens of millions of dollars every year to expand logging roads for a dying old-growth timber industry. This is bad for people, bad for a sustainable economy and bad for wildlife. Put simply, we should stop spending our taxpayer dollars to destroy public lands and all they provide for us in the Tongass National Forest.

“The Tongass is an unmatched treasure and with smart action now we can properly manage it for future generations. But those generations will never experience some of the most intact expanses of temperate rainforest or see some of the largest concentrations of wildlife like brown bears found anywhere in the world if forest management continues to operate like it's the 1980s instead of 2020.

“Old-growth forests play a vital role in helping to slow climate change. The Tongass alone stores more than 400 million metric tons of CO₂ and sequesters an additional 3 million metric tons annually, equivalent to taking nearly 650,000 cars off the road each year. So why, with our climate in crisis and



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Alaska experiencing climate impacts more acutely than most, are we even discussing chopping down a natural climate solution and a regional economic powerhouse just to ship overseas? The timber industry is a relic of the past, and today, we should be focused on what kind of world we leave to our kids.”

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Alaska Wilderness League stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations that believe in a sustainable future for Alaska. We honor and respect the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life remains deeply connected to the state’s land, waters, and wildlife. We believe that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources, which support hunting, fishing, tourism and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.



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