



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

APR 25 2018

The Honorable Andrew Mack
Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
550 West 7th
Suite 1400
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Commissioner Mack:

Thank you for your letter of January 19, 2018, regarding the request from the State of Alaska to consider a petition for rulemaking on the applicability of the 2001 Roadless Rule to the Tongass National Forest. I apologize for the delayed response.

Thank you for including the petition and the exhibits illustrating the history of the exemption and ensuing legal challenges. We share your interest in exploring options to help create jobs and prosperity for rural communities in Southeast Alaska, and the forest-products sector has long been part of this economy. We want to ensure that we continue to contribute to the health of the rural economy in Alaska by investing in the sustainability, health, and productivity of our National Forest.

We look forward to working with you in the future to explore and discuss the petition and the options to address application of the 2001 Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest. Additionally, Interim Chief Victoria Christiansen is reviewing your concerns regarding the 2016 Tongass Forest Plan and is working to address them.

Again, thank you for writing. If you have any further questions, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 720-7095.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue".

Sonny Perdue
Secretary