



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

DEC 13 2018

The Honorable Andy Josephson
Alaska State Legislature
716 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Representative Josephson:

Thank you for your letter of October 15, 2018, supporting the continued application of the 2001 Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest. I apologize for the delayed response.

In response to a petition from the State of Alaska, I instructed the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to initiate a public rulemaking process to address roadless area management concerns on the Tongass National Forest. Our approach to rulemaking aims to build a broad coalition of support for a state-specific Alaska Roadless Rule to address needs such as economic development, while still conserving roadless areas for future generations.

As part of the scoping period, the Forest Service hosted 18 community meetings across Alaska and in Washington, D.C. to provide information and answer questions about the rulemaking process. The agency plans to host another round of public meetings in the summer of 2019 with the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I appreciate your participation in this process by providing your comments.

Thank you for your interest in the management of the Tongass National Forest. The Forest Service values its collaboration with the State, local communities, and other partners as we strive for shared stewardship of our public lands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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- Ethics*

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Oct 15th, 2018

Secretary Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am commenting on the regulatory process for the Roadless Rule in Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest. I am writing to express my opinion, shared by many of my constituents and by many Southeast Alaskans, that the roadless rule should remain unchanged. As written, the regulation currently protects the cherished, irreplaceable Tongass National Rainforest, while allowing for necessary development and construction in designated roadless areas.

The roadless rule of 2001 was a compromise promulgated under the Clinton administration to protect National Forests and Grasslands while still allowing certain activities such as mining, drill pad construction, road construction connecting communities, alternative energy projects, etc. The existing process for land use has both protected the Tongass and Chugach forests from logging and overdevelopment, without completely prohibiting development of all kinds. Since 2001, more than 57 projects have been approved for development. It is for this reason, among many others, that I express my support for maintaining the status quo, rather than changing the regulation that is so clearly accomplishing its intended purpose.

Before the roadless rule was enacted, over half of the old growth in Southeast Alaska had been logged. It is of utmost importance to protect what remains of the Tongass specifically, as it is our nation's largest remaining temperate rainforest. It plays a vital role in providing the country with clean drinking water and has a vital economic and ecological role in our fisheries and tourism industries, two of the state's biggest sources of revenue and jobs. Meanwhile, the timber industry has been relatively inactive since its initial boom in the 1970s and today, much management practice is focused on preservation and protection. Preventing the development of this industry in this particular

*Alternate

region of Alaska has protected one of our greatest assets and tourist attractions. It also affords crucial ecological protections against erosion and landslides.

The roadless rule as is protects critical habitat in the Tongass for a diverse array of wildlife, including some uncommon species of wolf and bird. The protected habitat benefits Alaskans of all kinds, as well as Americans from all over. The categorized roadless areas of the Tongass preserve a subsistence lifestyle, commercial fisheries, and recreational activities for years to come. I encourage you to consider leaving this important regulation unchanged.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andy Josephson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light gray rectangular box.

Representative Andy Josephson



REP. ANDY JOSEPHSON

January-April

State Capitol, Room 430
Juneau, Alaska 99801

May-December

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Anchorage, Alaska 99503

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