



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

FEB 05 2020

Ms. Kathy Hope Erickson  
Council Chair  
Sitka Tribe of Alaska  
456 Katlian Street  
Sitka, Alaska 99835

Dear Chairwoman Erickson:

Thank you for your letter of November 19, 2019, regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule. I apologize for the delayed response.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) takes our trust responsibilities seriously, including the need for consultation with Tribes and native corporations. The Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, on my behalf, conducted an in-person consultation on November 2, 2019, in Juneau, Alaska. The meeting was in addition to the ongoing consultation on the Alaska Roadless Rule and our work with the Tribes and cooperating agencies.

USDA values the contribution of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska and your work with others to come up with solutions that address the roadless area management of the Tongass National Forest. Your input was vital in the development and analysis of the alternatives considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the associated draft rules (Appendix G). Your input has and will continue to inform USDA throughout the Rulemaking process.

I appreciate your interest in the pace of the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking effort. USDA is responding to broad National public interest in improving efficiencies and to reduce timelines in environmental analysis and decision-making processes. I believe the Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas timeline is responsive to this National need, while still providing opportunities for meaningful engagement by Tribes, other government agencies, partners, communities, and the public.

Thank you for your continued engagement. I appreciate your participation in this process toward a durable solution for roadless management in Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue rectangular background.

Sonny Perdue  
Secretary



# Sitka Tribe of Alaska

Tribal Government for Sitka, Alaska

November 19, 2019

Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Support for the Organized Village of Kake and Craig Tribal  
Association/Roadless Rule

Dear Secretary Perdue:

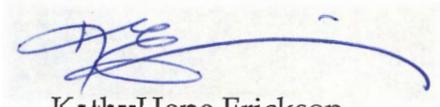
I write on behalf of the Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA), tribal government in Sitka, Alaska for over 4,000 tribal citizens. As a tribal government, STA is responsible for the health, welfare, safety, and culture of its citizens. STA supports the Organized Village of Kake (OVK) and Craig Tribal Association (CTA) exertion of sovereignty over their traditional lands and resources in the shadow of the proposed Alaska exemption to the 2001 Roadless Rule.

Throughout the accelerated and inequitable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process stakeholders (federally recognized tribal governments, the timber industry, conservation groups, and the general public) worked to come up with alternatives that met industry needs while maintaining protection of the Tongass National Forest under the Roadless Rule. The US Forest Service's preferred full exemption alternative is a slap in the face to all who participated in the scoping and review process and brings into question the integrity of the way the NEPA process was implemented.

The proposed full exemption alternative impedes the ability of OVK and CTA to protect cultural and subsistence resources within their traditional territories and threatens the ability of their tribal citizens to live a traditional way of life. The exemption would also exacerbate growing invasive species issues in the Tongass and limit the ability of state, federal, and tribal governments to mitigate climate change.

STA encourages the US Forest Service to engage in meaningful consultation with OVK and CTA that addresses their concerns over the proposed Alaska exemption to the Roadless Rule.

Sincerely,



Kathy Hope Erickson  
Council Chair



**SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA**

TRIBAL GOVERNMENT FOR SITKA, ALASKA

456 Katlian Street  
Sitka, Alaska 99835



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Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary  
US Department of Agriculture  
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Washington, DC 20250

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