

# Alaska Roadless Rule

Summary of written public comment following publication of the FEIS

## Introduction

This summary provides a brief overview of written public comments received over the course of 30 days following the publication of the Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Comments submitted were reviewed and informed the final decision.

This report captures themes found in perspectives presented in the written comments but is not exhaustive of all written comments.

## Overview of Comments Received

In total, approximately 11,000 comment letters were received during the 30 day period following publication of the FEIS. Most of the letters received (####) were variations on a set of form letters.

- Form letters: 23,111
- Petitions: 110,000 signatures
- Unique submissions: 1,400

## Themes from Comments Received

Most of the comments received did not indicate support for the proposed rule. Examples are below.

- Comparing economics impacts in Alaska for recreation/tourism/fishing versus timber
- Halt removal of protections on the Tongass
- Concern about anticipated road-building, oil exploration and logging impacts to
  - recreation and associated economic impacts;
  - air quality;
  - old growth;
  - solitude;
  - economy and Forest Service Budget (subsidization);
  - economic diversification for Alaska Panhandle;
  - wildlife and habitat fragmentation;
  - sacred sites and cultural resources known and not yet identified;
  - areas not yet recovered from logging prior to the roadless rule;
  - climate change from deforestation and forest degradation contributing to greenhouse gas pollution; and
  - Clean water, salmon and associated economic impacts from pollution of rivers and streams.
- Impacts to carbon sequestration
- Impacts to climate change
- Impacts to the rights of Indigenous Communities
- Concern that public involvement should extend beyond the state of Alaska
- Need for untouched wild places for future generations
- Concern about precedent for other National Forests' Roadless Areas
- Need to listen to the majority of input
- Biological value outweighs value of extracted resources (timber)



Supportive comments referred to the need for more public access, especially for individuals with mobility challenges.

In addition to comments on the publication of the Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas FEIS the following requests were made:

- Requests for a new planning process study for the Tongass (ex. Traditional Homelands Conservation Rule) to protect important areas for tribal people that includes full documentation and supports traditional uses including food, medicine and wellbeing;
- requests for expanding existing roadless; and
- requests to make the Alaska Roadless Rule Law.

