



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE
CENTRAL COUNCIL OF THE TLINGIT & HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA

Resolution EC 26-03

Title: Opposing the Proposed Rescission of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule
and Affirming Protection of the Tongass National Forest

WHEREAS, the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribe with more than 38,000 citizens; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Tlingit & Haida Constitution, the Executive Council is the governing body of Tlingit & Haida when the Tribal Assembly is not in session; and

WHEREAS, the Tribal Assembly is not in session; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida is a sovereign tribal nation with inherent rights and responsibilities to steward its traditional lands, waters, and resources according to Indigenous Knowledge, cultural values, and customary and traditional use practices; and

WHEREAS, the aboriginal and traditional homelands of Tlingit & Haida encompass and include the Tongass National Forest, and these lands, waters, and resources are fundamental to the ways-of-life, culture, spirituality, and identity of the Tlingit and Haida peoples; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida has stewarded these homelands since time immemorial through Indigenous governance systems and place-based knowledge that sustain ecological integrity and cultural continuity across generations; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Council has repeatedly affirmed the importance of protecting Tribal homelands, Alaska Native subsistence uses as defined in federal law, which is inseparable from Tlingit & Haida ways of life, cultural identity, spirituality, and intergenerational responsibilities, intact forest ecosystems, and meaningful government-to-government consultation through prior resolutions addressing Tongass National Forest management and related federal actions; and



WHEREAS, in 2020, Tlingit & Haida joined twelve federally recognized Alaska Native Tribes in submitting the Tribal Homelands Petition, documenting systemic failures in federal forest management and consultation processes and asserting Tribal authority and responsibility over Indigenous homelands within the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (“Roadless Rule”) provides critical protections for intact forest landscapes within the Tongass National Forest that support subsistence resources, cultural and spiritual use areas, wildlife habitat, watershed function, and climate resilience; and

WHEREAS, the proposed rescission of the Roadless Rule would increase road construction and industrial activity in currently unroaded areas, resulting in significant and irreversible impacts to Alaska Native subsistence resources, customary and traditional use practices, forest integrity, wildlife habitat, and Indigenous lifeways, as documented in the 2020 Tribal Homelands Petition and subsequent Tribal actions; and

WHEREAS, these impacts include diminished access to culturally important resources such as Sitka black-tailed deer, cultural trees, salmon and other anadromous fish, berries, and medicinal plants; fragmentation of habitat for culturally and ecologically important species; degradation of ecosystem functions; and erosion of opportunities for intergenerational transmission of Indigenous Knowledge; and

WHEREAS, the old-growth forests of the Tongass National Forest are among the most carbon-dense forests in the world, and increased logging and road construction would increase carbon emissions, reduce long-term carbon storage, and weaken climate resilience in southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, road construction in steep, rain-saturated, and karst landscapes increases landslide and sedimentation risk, disrupts fish habitat and passage, and degrades groundwater-dependent ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, Executive Order 13175, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the federal trust responsibility require full consideration of impacts to subsistence uses and the broader cultural, spiritual, and social systems those uses sustain, as well as early, meaningful government-to-government consultation with Tribal Nations; and

WHEREAS, recent federal actions related to the proposed rescission of the Roadless Rule continue a pattern of inadequate consultation and disregard for Tribal concerns identified in the 2020 Tribal Homelands Petition and prior Executive Council resolutions;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Executive Council of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska formally opposes the proposed rescission of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule as applied to the Tongass National Forest; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Council reaffirms its prior resolutions and positions, including those articulated in the 2020 Tribal Homelands Petition, calling for protection of Tribal homelands, subsistence resources, and intact forest ecosystems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Council affirms that continued roadless protections are necessary to safeguard Alaska Native subsistence resources, cultural and spiritual use areas, biodiversity, watershed integrity, and climate resilience within Tlingit & Haida homelands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Council affirms that Indigenous Knowledge constitutes best available science and must be fully integrated into baseline conditions, alternatives development, and cumulative impact analysis related to any proposed changes to roadless protections; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Council calls for full compliance with Section 810 of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, including comprehensive analysis of potential significant restrictions on subsistence uses and identification of mitigation measures and reasonable alternatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Council calls for early, ongoing, and meaningful government-to-government consultation, co-development opportunities on Tribal priority issues, and clear documentation of how tribal input is incorporated into federal decision-making related to the Tongass National Forest; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Executive Council directs the Tlingit & Haida President or designee to transmit this resolution to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), USDA Forest Service, the United States Department of the Interior, and other relevant federal agencies and decision-makers.

ADOPTED this 16th day of January 2026, by the Executive Council of the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, by a vote of 6 yeas, 0 nays, 0 abstentions and 0 absences.

CERTIFY



President Richard J. Peterson

ATTEST



Tribal Secretary Jacqueline L. Pata