

Public Comment on the Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule in the Tongass National Forest

Submitted by: [Your Full Name], Tlingit or Haida Tribal Citizen

Date: [Insert Date]

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [Your Name], and I am a proud tribal citizen of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida). I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to the proposed rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule in the Tongass National Forest and to provide comments for the development of the environmental impact statement (EIS) that will frame decisionmaking for this critical protection for the forests in my homeland.

As someone whose identity, culture, and way of life are deeply connected to the lands and waters of Southeast Alaska, I urge federal decision-makers to recognize what is at stake: the Tongass is not just a forest. It is a living, sacred homeland that has sustained our people physically, spiritually, and culturally for tens of thousands of years.

The Roadless Rule is Essential for Our Way of Life

The 2001 Roadless Rule protects over 9 million acres of forest in the Tongass from industrial logging and roadbuilding. These protections are essential to preserving our ability to hunt, fish, gather, and practice our traditions. Without our lands, sacred sites, salmon streams, old-growth habitats, and the species we rely on—including fish, deer, cedar, berries, and medicinal plants—are at risk.

Removing these protections would disrupt the delicate ecological balance that supports not only our traditional practices, but also the overall health of the region (and planet). This disruption would compromise our food security, our cultural survival, and our children's future ability to access these resources and places that are critical to our cultural vitality and survival.

One-Size-Fits-All Policy Does Not Work Here

The justification for rescinding the Roadless Rule appears based on wildfire risks in “the Lower 48 states”—places where forest mismanagement and suppression of Indigenous burning practices have caused dangerous overgrowth over the past century. Those conditions **do not exist** in the Tongass National Forest. This near-arctic and temperate rainforest ecosystem is shaped by very different natural forces. Applying policies designed for wildfire-prone areas to Southeast Alaska is not only scientifically wrong, but culturally irresponsible.

We Need Protection, Not Logging

Let's be honest—the main reason for rescinding the Roadless Rule is to allow more old-growth logging. That approach belongs in the past. Cutting down centuries-old trees for short-term gain is not sustainable, especially in a time of accelerating climate change. These monumental trees—red and yellow cedar, Sitka spruce—may never come back if they are logged now. And their loss would be permanent, not just for the forest, but for our culture.

As a Tribal Citizen of Tlingit & Haida, I support a future where second-growth forests are used wisely, old-growth areas are restored and protected, and our lands are managed based on Indigenous knowledge, values, and stewardship. I do not support opening more of our homelands to exploitation, especially without consultation OR consent from sovereign governments

Climate Change Makes Protection More Urgent

The Tongass National Forest is one of the largest carbon sinks in the world. Old-growth trees play a huge role in storing carbon and regulating climate. Logging these trees in the middle of a climate crisis is reckless and short-sighted. We need climate solutions rooted in Indigenous land care, not more extractive industry.

My Request to You

I respectfully ask that the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Forest Service:

- **Keep the 2001 Roadless Rule in place** and fully enforce it in the Tongass;
- **Respect Tribal sovereignty** and our right to be fully consulted and engaged about decisions affecting our homelands;
- **Support Indigenous-led stewardship and restoration** of our forests, in a way that benefits our people, our coastal communities, and protects our future.

As an Alaska Native person, I see this forest not as a resource to be used up for an outdated industry, but as a relative to be cared for. The removal of these protections is a threat not just to the land, but to our identity, our food systems, and our sacred responsibility to future generations.

Gunalchéesh / Háw'aa for considering my comments. Please make the right decision—for the forest, for the people, and for the generations yet to come.

Respectfully,

[Your Full Name]

Tlingit or Haida Tribal Citizen

[Your City or Community, Alaska]
[Optional: Contact Information]