

**CITY OF GUSTAVUS, ALASKA
RESOLUTION CY25-20**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF GUSTAVUS, ALASKA, URGING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE NOT TO RESCIND THE ROADLESS AREA CONSERVATION RULE AND
TO ENACT STRONG PROTECTIONS FOR OLD-GROWTH FORESTS IN THE TONGASS
NATIONAL FOREST**

WHEREAS, The City of Gustavus is a distinctive community that prospers by and through protection of its natural resources; and,

WHEREAS, the sustainability and resilience of our community's economy and our lifestyles depend upon nurturing and sustaining the natural resources of our forests, rivers, and ocean, locally and regionally in Southeast Alaska; and,

WHEREAS, many Gustavus residents obtain their livelihood from environmentally dependent tourism and fishing activities; and,

WHEREAS, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule was first adopted in 2001 to protect over 50 million acres of our nation's most essential and intact roadless areas in national forests throughout the United States; and,

WHEREAS, roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest represent some of the most spectacular and unique lands anywhere in the national forest system and support hunting, fishing, and customary and traditional uses and provide unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities and opportunities for businesses; and,

WHEREAS, the amount of stored carbon in the intact old-growth forest and soils of the Tongass represents one of the highest carbon stores in the world, and the conservation of intact inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass is essential for maintaining America's resilience and slowing climate change throughout the world; and,

WHEREAS, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule provides essential flexibility, allowing the U.S. Forest Service to authorize construction or reconstruction of a road in an inventoried roadless area if it is determined that it is needed for specific reasons, including some timber harvest, and as of April 2019 (the most recent data available) more than 50 projects including mines, hydropower and intertie, a timber sale, road reconstruction, and a U.S. Coast Guard antenna, among others, have been approved; and,

WHEREAS, durable protection for old-growth and mature trees in the Tongass is needed and the Roadless Area Conservation Rule provides our community and others in Southeast Alaska with such safeguards; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council of Gustavus, Alaska, has affirmed its support for the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in two previous resolutions, Resolution CY18-31, in 2018, and Resolution CY21-15, in 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is preparing an environmental impact statement that will rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule nationwide, including on the Tongass National Forest (90 *Fed. Reg.* 42179, August 29, 2025); and,

WHEREAS, the USFS proposed rule claims a rationale of increased fire risk and a need for fire risk remediation in roadless areas, fire risk in the rain-soaked Tongass National Forest is a non-problem and road access in national forests nationwide increases the risk of human-caused catastrophic fires; and,

WHEREAS, the communities in wildland urban interfaces nationwide are most effectively protected by fire hardening the structures and the vegetation immediately around them, rather than by logging, thinning, or other “mitigation” measures in nearby or distant roadless forest lands; and,

WHEREAS, large-scale commercial logging in our region would cause significant harm to the ways of life that characterize our community and force the residents and the community to use their resources to fight logging proposals and to advocate for durable protection of the region’s national forest lands.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Gustavus, Alaska, supports the protecting the remaining old-growth trees on the Tongass National Forest from any large-scale commercial logging and urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture to keep the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in place; and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of Gustavus, Alaska, opposes any rescission of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule both nationwide and, in particular, on the Tongass National Forest. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule should continue to underpin and inform National Forest management plans as a core management policy.

PASSED and **APPROVED** by the Gustavus City Council this XXth day of _____ 2025, and effective upon adoption.

Sally A. McLaughlin, Mayor

Attest: Liesl M. Barker, City Clerk