

**CITY OF GUSTAVUS
RESOLUTION CY21-15**

A RESOLUTION CITY OF GUSTAVUS COMMENTING ON THE USFS ROADLESS RULE

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

WHEREAS, the amount of stored carbon in our 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 Tongass provides a wide range of ecosystem services beyond carbon sequestration to residents and visitors alike on a 24/7 basis naturally and at no cost to the taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, increased logging of mature forest in the existing roadless areas of the Tongass will seriously impact the ability of the forest to provide these vital ecosystem services; and

WHEREAS, the community of Gustavus in the 1980s successfully advocated for wilderness status for Icy Strait islands and for the designation of the Chicken Creek watershed and much of northwest Chichagof Island as roadless wildlands; and

WHEREAS, the community of Gustavus has opposed the large-scale roading and logging at Homeshore (Point Couverden); and

WHEREAS, timber from the Tongass has primarily been sold at a significant loss to US taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the 372 timber-related jobs in Southeast Alaska in 2019 (the year before the COVID19 pandemic) represented only 0.81 percent of total Southeast Alaska employment; and

WHEREAS, timber cut on the Tongass National Forest is primarily exported to China as round logs, inhibiting the development of a regional value-added wood-products industry; and

WHEREAS, if the USFS and the State of Alaska are interested in increasing employment on the Tongass, there are numerous opportunities to employ forest workers to restore forest ecosystems damaged by past logging activities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that, given the serious and long-lasting negative impacts of the exemption from Alaska of Roadless Rule protections on the Tongass, the City of Gustavus strongly supports lasting protection for all inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest as provided for in the 2001 Roadless Rule, and it requests that the exemption of Alaska from the Roadless Rule be eliminated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Gustavus urges that sustainable timber-production opportunities be identified on federal, state, and private forest lands, particularly focusing on second-growth timber, outside the existing roadless areas, in support of a regional wood-products industry suitable in scale to the demand for products from this region; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the City of Gustavus urges the USFS to invest in programs and employment opportunities for Southeast residents to restore the health and productivity of Tongass forests and streams as a means of supporting vital ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, small-scale timber production, fish and wildlife populations, natural vistas, visitor amenities, subsistence, hydrological resources, and more.

The City of Gustavus submits the attached letter with expanded and specific comments for our local area.

PASSED and **APPROVED** by the Gustavus City Council this XXth day of _____, 20XX.

Mike Taylor, Mayor

Karen Platt CMC, City Clerk