

Debra Thompson

From: USDA Forest Service <forestservice@public.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 23, 2021 5:51 AM
To: Assembly
Subject: USDA Forest Service Alaska Roadless Rule Repeal Update

Apologies, the previous version of this email had an error in the link to provide comments. The preferred method for submitting comments is: <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FS-2021-0007-0006>. The error is corrected below.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced it is taking steps to repeal the 2020 Alaska Roadless Rule and restore protections to more than nine million acres of inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest. The Alaska Roadless Rule, approved on Oct. 29, 2020, exempted the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule, which prohibited road construction, reconstruction and timber harvest in inventoried roadless areas – with limited exceptions.

A proposed rule repealing the 2020 rule has been published for public comment.

USDA determined that the underlying goals and purposes of the 2001 Roadless Rule continue to be a critical part of conserving the resources of the Tongass, especially when it comes to the values that roadless areas represent for local communities, Alaska Natives and the economy of Southeast Alaska. The decision to repeal the 2020 Alaska Roadless Rule is based on the multiple ecologic, social, cultural and economic values supported by roadless areas on the Tongass. More than 95% of commenters opposed exempting the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule during the public comment periods leading up to the 2020 Alaska Roadless Rule.

“Restoring the Tongass’ roadless protections supports the advancement of economic, ecologic and cultural sustainability in Southeast Alaska in a manner that is guided by local voices,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “The proposed rule is considerate of Alaska’s Tribal Nations, community input, and builds on the region’s economic drivers of tourism and fishing.”

A 60-day comment period begins Nov. 23, 2021 with the publication of a proposal to repeal the 2020 Alaska Roadless Rule. Comments can be submitted in the following ways:

- **Preferred:** Submit electronically using the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FS-2021-0007-0006>
- Mail to: Alaska Roadless Rule, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 21628, Juneau, Alaska 99802–1628
- Hand Delivery / Courier to: Alaska Roadless Rule, USDA Forest Service, 709 W. 9th Street, Juneau, Alaska 99802
- Email: fs.akrdlessrule@usda.gov

Comments are encouraged on the proposed rule. Comments, including names and addresses, are placed in the official record and are available for public inspection and copying. The public may inspect comments received at www.regulations.gov.

At 16.7 million acres, the Tongass National Forest is the largest national forest in the country and represents the largest intact tract of coastal temperate rainforest on earth. The forest is within the traditional homelands of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples, holds more biomass per acre than any other rainforest in the world and stores more carbon than any other national forest.

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