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## **Action Alert: USDA Notice of Intent to Repeal Exemption of Roadless Rule Comment deadline January 24, 2022**

The US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) issued a November 23, 2021 Notice of Intent to Repeal the October 29, 2020 Exemption to the 2001 Roadless Rule for the Tongass National Forest. Comments are due by January 24<sup>th</sup>.

Please submit comments opposing the repeal of the exemption!

**Written comment deadline: January 24, 2022**

**NEW! Use our easy click to comment using a prepared template. Click here:**  
<https://oneclickpolitics.global.ssl.fastly.net/promo/3wR>

**Or, craft your own letter. Contact information and suggested talking points are as follows:**

**Submit online:** <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FS-2021-0007-0006>

**Mail to:**

Alaska Roadless Rule  
USDA Forest Service  
P.O. Box 21628  
Juneau, Alaska  
99802-1628

Email: [sm.fs.akrdlessrule@usda.gov](mailto:sm.fs.akrdlessrule@usda.gov)

**Points you may want to make in your comments:**

- Describe you/your company and how the Roadless Rule has negatively impacted your livelihood/business/lifestyle.
- The Forest Service should maintain the policy determination made by the USDA in 2003 and 2020 by maintaining a total exemption.
- Six Alaskan governors and the Alaska Congressional Delegation both Republican and Democrat, have requested a total exemption of the Tongass from the Roadless Rule.
- Alaska and Southeast Alaska are unique and the Department of Agriculture acknowledged this in 2003 when it exempted Alaska from the 2001 Roadless Rule.



- The Department has concluded that the social and economic hardships to Southeast Alaska outweigh the potential long-term ecological benefits because the Tongass Forest plan adequately provides for the ecological sustainability of the Tongass. Every facet of Southeast Alaska's economy is important and the potential adverse impacts from application of the roadless rule are not warranted, given the abundance of roadless areas and protections already afforded in the Tongass Forest Plan.
- The 2001 Roadless Rule prohibitions are unnecessary in the Tongass which can be adequately protected through the normal national forest land management planning process as intended by Congress in 1976 when it enacted the National Forest Management Act.
- The nationwide Roadless Rule usurped much of the land planning process mandated by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), particularly in Alaska. Exempting the Tongass from the Roadless Rule will not authorize any development activities, but it will enable the NFMA planning process to function as intended.
- Congress has already enacted over 6.6 million acres of Wilderness and other restrictive land use categories prior to the promulgation of the Roadless Rule on the Tongass through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA). The remaining areas were passed over so they could support local employment, including year-around timber manufacturing jobs in a region where there are minimal state or private timberlands available to the mills.
- Application of the 2001 rule has severely impacted the social and economic fabric of Southeast Alaska communities. It violates the "no more" provision of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and prevents the Forest Service from meeting timber demand in violation of the Tongass Timber Reform Act. It has devastated the timber industry where sustainable harvests have plummeted and employment is now a fraction of what it was prior to enactment of the Rule.
- The 2001 Rule's nationwide, one-size-fits-all, approach doesn't account for Southeast Alaska's uniqueness, needs, and limited surface infrastructure.
- Reimposition of the 2001 Roadless Rule fails to consider or analyze Congress's decision in the 2005 SAFETYLU Transportation Legislation to implement the 2004 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan by authorizing 19 easements allowing for road construction in the Tongass irrespective of IRA status.
- Road access to the billions of dollars of discovered and undiscovered minerals on the Tongass along with individual claims explorers may have to some of those minerals has been made reliant on the subjective determination of what type of access to allow to a mining project by Forest Service officials.
- The 2001 Roadless Rule makes uncertain the ability to access future hydroprojects and other renewable energy projects by road. Access to geothermal projects by road is not allowed.
- Any Alaska-specific rule should allow further road access for not only timber, mineral, tourism, and renewable energy, but access to resources important to residents for subsistence, recreation, and other community economic, cultural, and social activities.

**Comment deadline: January 24, 2022**