

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2003

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

We are writing to express our deep concern over your recent decision to revise the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. On June 9, 2003, Secretary Veneman announced the Administration would "retain the Roadless Area Conservation Rule". Under the guise of upholding the rule, however, the Administration is in fact dismantling the rule by allowing states to seek exemptions, and by excluding the Tongass, the largest national forest from its provisions, and jeopardizing the status of the Chugach, the second largest forest.

As you know, the Roadless rule protects against road construction and logging on 58.5 million acres of land in our national forests. It was intended to safeguard watershed and ecosystem health in both the short- and long-term, as well as to ensure that roadless areas are managed to maintain their unique character for future generations. The rule was the culmination of years of public debate, 600 public hearings, and over 2 million comments -- the largest federal rulemaking in our nation's history.

The Administration's plans to exempt Alaska's Tongass national forest and likely exempt the Chugach national forest significantly undermine the rule. These forests--the nation's largest and most precious--encompass approximately 14 million acres of roadless areas, thereby representing over one-quarter of the total lands covered by the Roadless rule. The decision opens the door to logging and road building in the world's largest remaining old-growth temperate rainforest. With the Forest Service planning approximately 50 timber sales on the Tongass, 300,000 acres of the best old-growth habitat within 1.3 million unroaded acres are imminently threatened with irreversible impacts.

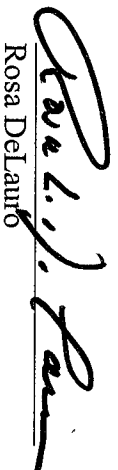
Of additional concern is the announcement that your Administration will propose changes to the Roadless rule allowing Governors to exempt the 43 million acres of protected national lands within their own states. These pristine forests are areas of national significance, and they warrant a national policy of protection. We find unacceptable any rule that circumvents the will of the American people and supercedes their rights to influence management of their lands by allowing Governors to exempt national lands at the state level. The decision represents a significant rollback of roadless protection, in the face of overwhelming and unprecedented nationwide public support for greater protection for the forests.

The American people have clearly communicated their wish to preserve the Roadless rule as it was originally enacted. Despite this popular and sensible rule, despite a court ruling upholding the rule, and despite your Administration's assertions to the contrary, your settlement of the State of Alaska suit and subsequent decisions severely weaken the core protections and safeguards of the rule, leaving our national forests subject to more harmful logging and development. We strongly urge you to re-examine and reject the ill-conceived recent changes that have been proposed to the Roadless rule and to preserve these wild forests for future generations.

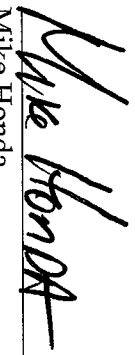
Sincerely,




Jayantee




Rosa DeLauro


  
Mike Honda

  
John Conyers

  
Henry Waxman

  
Carolyn Maloney

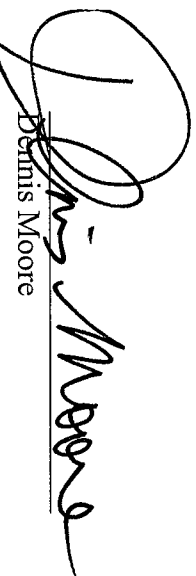
  
Lloyd Doggett

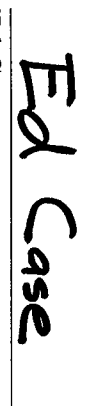
  
Anthony Weiner


  
Dale E. Gildea

  
Jim McDermott

  
Anibal Acevedo-Vila

  
Dennis Moore

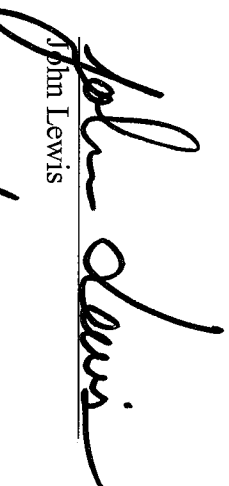
  
Ed Case

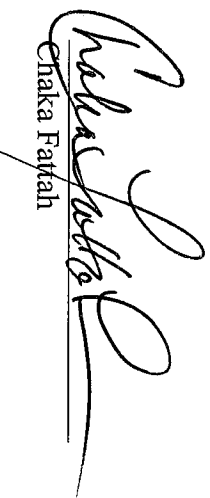
  
Barbara Lee

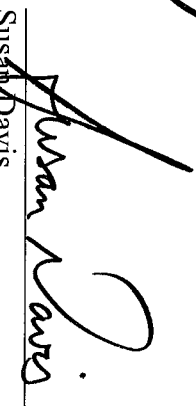
  
Jim Cooper

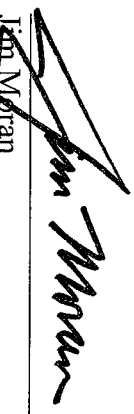
  
William Delahunt

  
Jane Harman


  
John Lewis

  
Chaka Fattah


  
Susan Davis


  
Jim Moran

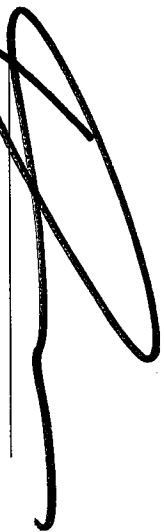
  
Baron Hill

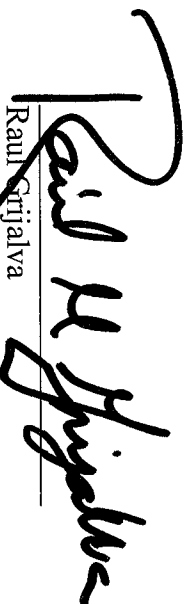
  
Ellen Tauscher

  
Eliot Engel


  
Luis Gutierrez

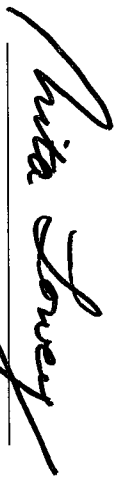
  
Steve Israel


  
David Wu

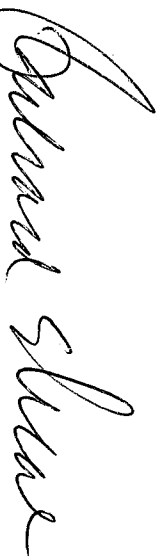
  
Raul Grijalva

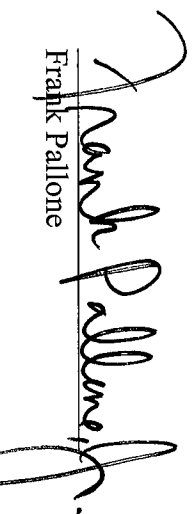
  
Tammy Baldwin

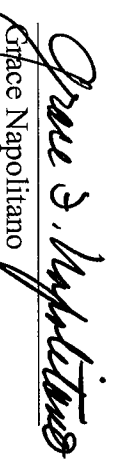
  
Melvin L. Watt

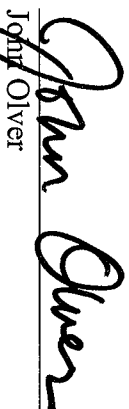
  
Nita Lowey

  
Betty McCollum


  
Richard Neal

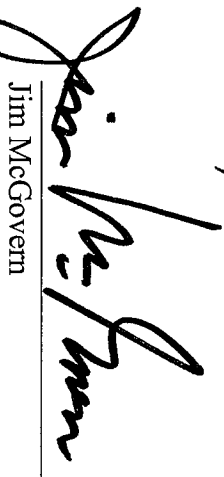
  
Frank Pallone

  
Grace S. Napolitano

  
John Oliver

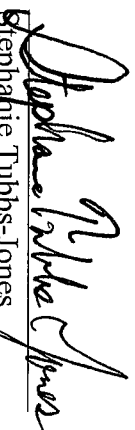
  
Lois Capps

  
Rush Holt

  
Jim McGovern

  
Brad Miller

  
Bob Filner

  
Stephanie Tubbs-Jones

Marcy Kaptur  
Marcy Kaptur

Maurice Hinchey  
Maurice Hinchey

Rick Larsen  
Rick Larsen

Martin O. Sabo  
Martin Sabo

Pete Stark  
Pete Stark

Sander Levin  
Sander Levin

Jim Langrish  
James Langrish

Anna Eshoo  
Anna Eshoo

Denise S. Majette  
Denise Majette

Earl Blumenauer  
Earl Blumenauer

Gene Green  
Gene Green

Adam Schiff  
Adam Schiff

Linda Sanchez  
Linda Sanchez

Joe Hoelzel  
Joseph Hoefel

Ed Markey  
Ed Markey

Tim Ryan  
Tim Ryan

Donald Payne  
Donald Payne

Rob Andrews  
Rob Andrews

Mark Udall  
Mark Udall

John Tierney  
John Tierney

  
Louise Slaughter

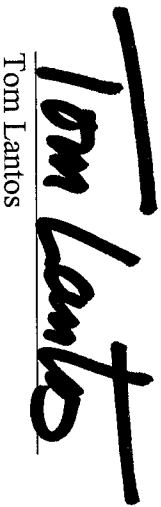
  
Eleanor Holmes Norton

  
Barney Frank

  
Chris Van Hollen

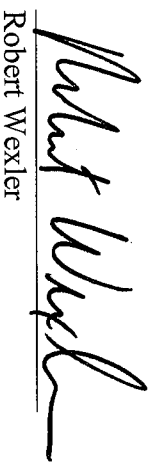
  
Sheila Jackson Lee

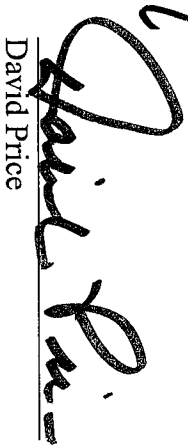
  
Zoe Lofgren

  
Tom Lantos

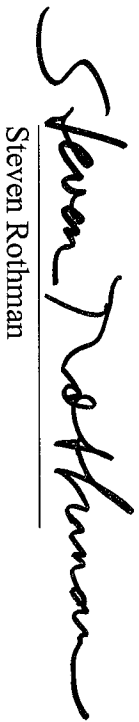
  
William Clay

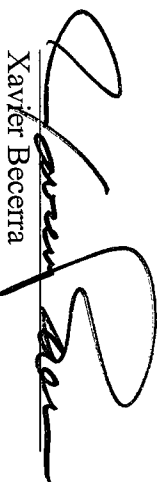
  
Jose Serrano

  
Robert Wexler

  
David Price

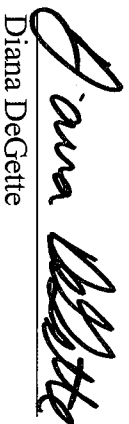
  
George Miller

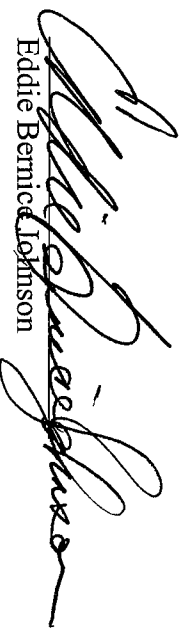
  
Steven Rothman

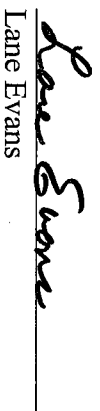
  
Xavier Becerra

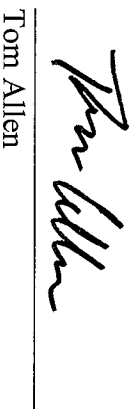
  
Jay Schakowsky

  
Ferrel Nadler

  
Diana DeGette

  
Eddie Bernice Johnson

  
Lane Evans

  
Tom Allen

*Karen McCarthy*  
Karen McCarthy

*John B. Larson*  
John Larson

*Bobby Rusk*  
Bobby Rusk

*Sam Farr*  
Sam Farr

*Robert Menendez*  
Robert Menendez

*Lucille Roybal-Allard*  
Lucille Roybal-Allard

*Loretta Sanchez*  
Loretta Sanchez

*Adam Smith*  
Adam Smith

*Michael Michaud*  
Michael Michaud

*Bernie Sanders*  
Bernie Sanders

*Howard Berman*  
Howard Berman

*Ron Kind*  
Ron Kind

*Nick Rahall*  
Nick Rahall

*Danny Davis*  
Danny Davis

*Julia Carson*  
Julia Carson

*Eljah Cummings*  
Eljah Cummings

*Joseph Crowley*  
Joseph Crowley

*James Clyburn*  
James Clyburn

*Lynn Woolsey*  
Lynn Woolsey

*Alcee Hastings*  
Alcee Hastings

*Gary Ackerman*  
Gary Ackerman

*Shelley Berkley*  
Shelley Berkley

*Juanita Millender-McDonald*

Juanita Millender-McDonald

*Maxine Waters*  
Maxine Waters

*Michael Doyle*  
Michael Doyle

*Ed Towns*  
Ed Towns

*Peter Deutsch*

Peter Deutsch