



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
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AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

December 16, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush,

Our nation's natural heritage is at a critical juncture, and your leadership is crucial to protect our national forests. Americans treasure our national forests because they provide clean drinking water, critical habitat for wildlife, and invaluable opportunities for recreation and solitude.

As the Governor of a state that relies on its clean air and drinking water and access to forests for recreational pursuits such as hunting and fishing for a significant portion of its economic health, I urge you to uphold the Road less Area Conservation Rule as adopted in January 2001. I was pleased to support road less rule legislation during my service in the United States House of Representatives as it is balanced policy that protects tens of millions of acres of our remaining wild forests from most logging and road construction.

The road less rule was finalized after years of scientific study, 600 public hearings, and a record 1.6 million comments in support of the rule. This extraordinarily thorough process created sound public policy with unprecedented public support. I am concerned that your Administration may weaken this historic conservation measure.

Maine communities adjacent to our state's 6,000 acres of road less rule "protected" lands depend on the recreational and scenic attraction of these landscapes for their economic vitality. As the chief executive of a state that relies on its natural resources, protecting our air, water, and landscape is a serious concern. It is a significant reason why Americans from across the country stay or come to Maine to do business. As we build a successful future for our families and our children, we rely on maintaining the high quality of our natural assets that Mainers deserve. The Road less Area Conservation Rule is part of this effort.

On behalf of the citizens of Maine, I urge you to uphold the rule as it was promulgated in 2001 in order to preserve the natural legacy of America for our children and grandchildren.

Sincerely,

  
John Elias Baldacci  
Governor



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