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For Immediate Release  
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## Inslee Statement on Roadless Announcement

*Washington, D.C.* - U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee today criticized the Bush administration's moves to undermine the Roadless rule. In a late-day press-release, the administration announced that the U.S. Department of Justice and the State of Alaska would settle its challenge to the Roadless Rule in Alaska, providing for exemption of the Tongass and Chugach National Forests from the rule. The administration also announced it would propose for public review significant changes to the Roadless rule, such as allowing state Governors to pursue certain exemptions from the law, which stands to substantially undermine the effectiveness of this national policy. Inslee made the following statement:

"This action will not stand. I find today's announcement unsurprising and very dismaying. My colleagues and I had hoped that the administration would maintain the Roadless rule, but true to character, the Roadless rule may follow other environmental roll-backs to its grave. Today, the administration announced it will rip wide open the Tongass and Chugach National Forests, revoking Roadless rule protection for nearly 300,000 acres of America's pristine wilderness area. One thing we know about this administration is that it will never miss a chance to damage the environment. Today, our pristine forests became its latest victims.

"Further, the new public review proposed by the administration today will undoubtedly turn out to be another trick designed to roll back the Roadless rule under the cover of administrative action. The Roadless rule underwent the largest rule-making process in history, and the overwhelming majority of Americans support this common-sense forest protection policy. This administration is rolling back every sound and sensible piece of environmental law. Why must this administration continue to go against the desires of the American public? Loud and clear, Americans have called on the federal government for strong protection of their national forests.

"Rep. Sherwood Boehlert and I have introduced the National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Act, bi-partisan legislation that ensures strong protection for America's last pristine forest lands. This legislation will provide lasting protection for Roadless areas, which must remain the law of the land. Congress cannot allow the Roadless rule to be undermined. Today's announcement will refocus American attention on the Roadless policy, and I will continue working in Congress to ensure that Americans receive the environmental protections they requested."

U.S. Reps. Jay Inslee (D-WA) and Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) last week introduced the National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Act, which will make the "Roadless rule" into federal law. This bipartisan legislation is supported by over 150 original cosponsors.

This environmental legislation would protect nearly sixty million acres of pristine National Forest lands from logging, mining, and drilling, except in cases where the logging is necessary to protect forest health, to improve habitat for endangered species or to reduce fire danger. The lands will remain open for recreational use including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and the use of snowmobiles and dirtbikes.

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