



PRESS RELEASE

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Washington, DC – This week the U.S. Forest Service released its final regulations replacing the popular 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule with a process that requires governors to petition for protections for national forests in their states with no guarantee of protection.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) released the following statement:

"Despite its 2001 promise to 'uphold' the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, today the Bush administration has finally replaced it with their own version. Instead of having a uniform national standard for our forests, the administration has taken another step towards ceding responsibility for a national treasure to states. This is what we have come to expect from an administration that places former timber industry lobbyists in charge of overseeing federal forest policy.

"Sadly, in some states where there are complicated politics, governors may not be sympathetic to environmental protections. This is why there are federal environmental regulations like the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. Under the administration's proposed changes, protection of roadless areas is not guaranteed even in environmentally motivated states like Oregon. Many of the states also do not have the resources to protect these forests.

"I am extremely disappointed that the President has ignored a record-breaking 2.5 million comments overwhelmingly in favor of protecting America's roadless areas, including over 58,000 comments from Oregonians. Oregonians recognize that roadless areas provide essential habitat to threatened and endangered species, they are home to pristine watersheds on which our municipalities rely for clean drinking water, and many contain the last remnants of pristine old growth which is critical to forest health and resistance to wildfire.

"Although I regret that today we are taking a huge step backwards in protecting our national forests across the country, I pledge to work with Governor Kulongoski to protect Oregon's treasures."