

Petersburg Borough

RESOLUTION #2019-17

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PETERSBURG BOROUGH IN SUPPORT OF
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 6 OF THE PROPOSED ALASKA ROADLESS
RULE, EXEMPTING THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST FROM THE 2001
ROADLESS RULE; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

WHEREAS, in 2001 U.S. Forest Service adopted the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, or “Roadless Rule,” to manage and restrict use upon National Forest System lands including the Tongass National Forest of Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, since its promulgation, the Roadless Rule has placed further economic burdens on the isolated communities of Southeast Alaska including Petersburg by restricting development and access opportunities in an already economically challenged region; and

WHEREAS, many efforts have been made since 2001 to overturn or otherwise create meaningful changes to the Roadless Rule including the State of Alaska’s 2018 petition for complete exemption from the Rule through a proposed Alaska-specific Roadless Rule; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducted a review of how the Rule should be applied to the Tongass National Forest and determined that the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan provides for sufficient protections through already specified roadless areas, and therefore the 2001 Roadless Rule is unwarranted and ineffective as applied to the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS, through the continued efforts of the State of Alaska, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s recently released draft Environmental Impact Statement for exempting the Tongass National Forest lists six potential options for the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule, including Alternative 6 specifying a full exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the Rule; and

WHEREAS, exempting the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule would release 9.2 million acres from Roadless Rule restrictions and would enable cost-effective access for development; and

WHEREAS, the approved 2016 Tongass Forest Land and Resource Management Plan provides for significant opportunities for management and protections for fish and wildlife habitats, recreation, wilderness and other resources; and

WHEREAS, exemption from the Rule may restore countless economic opportunities for the people of Southeast Alaska through varied land use including timber, mining, fish and wildlife, wilderness, recreation, transportation, energy and hydropower; and

WHEREAS, the above stated land uses and associated development opportunities would support living wage employment opportunities, an enhanced quality of life for Southeast Alaska residents, and have a multiplier effect for the region by allowing sustainable economic growth in a number of economic sectors.

WHEREAS, Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) supports the repeal of the Roadless Rule.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Petersburg Borough as follows:

Section 1: The Petersburg Borough strongly supports preferred Alternative 6 of the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule, exempting the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, or “Roadless Rule.”

Section 2: The Petersburg Borough supports legislation that provides for a variety of economic development opportunities to strengthen Petersburg’s and the region’s economy and to create jobs.

Section 3: The Petersburg Borough shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the USDA Forest Service, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan and Representative Don Young.

Section 4: This resolution shall become effective immediately upon passage.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the Petersburg Borough on December 2, 2019.

Mark Jensen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Debra Thompson, Clerk