



For Immediate Release

21-046

State of Alaska Intervenes in Case in Defense of Tongass Roadless Rule Exemption, Welcomes Support from Southeast Communities and Industry

March 23, 2021 (Anchorage, AK) – Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy welcomes support from Southeast communities and businesses in defense of the 2020 Tongass Exemption Rule to the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule). Today, a group of twenty-three parties moved to intervene in litigation to support defense of the 2020 Tongass Exemption Rule. The group includes former Governor Frank H. Murkowski, the cities of Craig and Ketchikan, Southeast Conference, Southeast power companies, multiple Chambers of Commerce, the Alaska Miners' Association, construction businesses, and logistics businesses.

"The Tongass holds great economic opportunity for not only Southeast Alaska, but the State as a whole," **said Governor Dunleavy**. "From resuming our timber industry to attracting tourism, this region has the potential to create good paying jobs and it is my administration's intent to defend our state's rights and improve access to public lands. Logging in the Tongass is done to some of the strictest environmental standards in the world. The Department of Natural Resources monitors state timber sales for compliance with the timber practices act and protection of watersheds. Such standards and monitoring are far above logging practices in other countries, which result in massive deforestation and fires that create large amounts of emissions."

The State's petition for rulemaking in 2018 led to the 2020 Tongass Exemption Rule promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture in October 2020. The rule exempts the Tongass National Forest from the damaging restrictions against road construction and timber harvest in the national Roadless Rule. The 2020 Tongass Exemption Rule is subject to a challenge before the United States District Court for the District of Alaska.

"My office is pleased to defend the 2020 Tongass Exemption Rule that the State of Alaska and others worked for years to obtain," **Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor said.** "We look forward to working with the other intervenors. The Roadless Rule violated ANILCA and the defense of the exemption rule for the Tongass is part of my office's commitment to statehood defense."

Judge Sharon L. Gleason granted the State's motion to intervene in defense of the 2020 Tongass Exemption Rule on March 11, 2021.

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