

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave  
Washington, D.C., 20250

The Honorable Tom Schultz  
Chief  
U.S. Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins and Chief Schultz,

We write with concern that, in affording just 21 days for public comment, the U.S. Forest Service is not providing an adequate opportunity for meaningful public participation on its Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (NOI) for the proposed repeal of the Roadless Rule. We respectfully request that you extend the comment period by at least thirty days. We also encourage you to conduct more robust stakeholder engagement, including by holding public hearings in all states with Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) and consulting proactively with Tribal governments.

The Roadless Rule is a landmark public-lands rule that has ensured the responsible management of nearly 60 million acres of National Forest System land and the irreplaceable resources they provide since its inception. Its repeal represents a major shift in the longstanding management of lands in virtually all federal forests across the country – forests that our constituents care deeply about. This includes protections of over half of the 17 million-acre mature and old-growth Tongass National Forest in Alaska – America’s largest forest and last remaining temperate rainforest – which offers critical opportunities for Tribal subsistence, tourism, outdoor recreation, and carbon sequestration. Twenty-one days is simply not enough to provide the opportunity for meaningful participation that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires.

This is an issue with broad public interest from conservationists, recreationists, Tribal communities, and more. When the Roadless Rule was first adopted, more than 1.6 million comments were submitted in favor of the rule. Everyday Americans have a real stake in this issue, and twenty-one days is simply not enough time for individuals to take time out of their busy lives to research, prepare, and submit meaningful comments on such a complex and significant issue. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) held more than 400 public meetings across the country during the 2001 Roadless Rule rulemaking process and has a responsibility to similarly ensure adequate opportunity for the public to weigh in on the proposed repeal.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of the U.S. Government to hold robust and meaningful Tribal consultation with any impacted Tribal governments. Considering the breadth of the Roadless Rule’s purview, numerous Tribes will be impacted, and to our knowledge there has been virtually no Tribal consultation on this significant and sudden policy shift. This is contrary to the Forest Service’s protocol, which requires a minimum tribal consultation period of 120 days for national-level decisions.

Participation by Tribes, local governments and by the public, “in cooperation” with the federal government, is central to the democratic process, and execution of the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”)<sup>1</sup>. As the U.S. Supreme Court has explained, NEPA guarantees that “relevant information will be made available to the

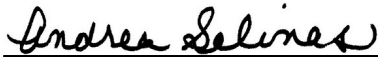
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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. 4331(a).

larger audience that may also play a role in both the decision-making process and the implementation of that decision.”<sup>2</sup> Allowing the public to participate early on addresses NEPA’s “manifest concern with preventing uninformed action,” because it is through the “broad dissemination of information” that “the public” can “react to the effects of a proposed action at a meaningful time.”<sup>3</sup>

Considering the complex nature of this proposal and the widespread local and national interests likely to be affected, we strongly urge you to provide a minimum of 45 days for the public to comment and participate in public hearings, and 120 days for Tribal consultation.

Sincerely,



Andrea Salinas  
Member of Congress



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress



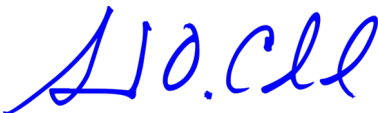
Ruben Gallego  
United States Senator



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator

<sup>2</sup> *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 349 (1989).

<sup>3</sup> *Marsh v. Or. Nat. Res. Council*, 490 U.S. 360, 371 (1989).



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



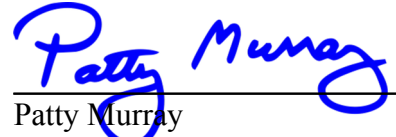
Rashida Tlaib  
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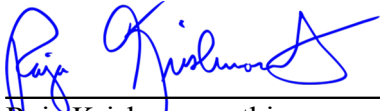
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



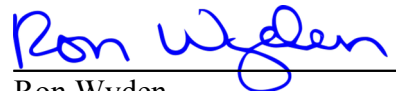
Jim Tokuda  
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Patty Murray  
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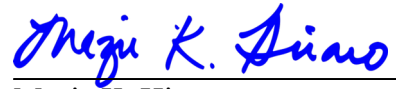
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Member of Congress



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



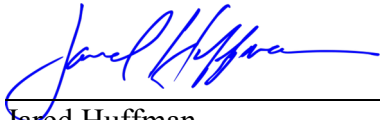
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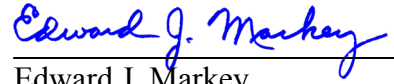
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Tina Smith  
United States Senator



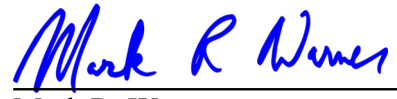
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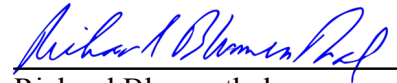
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Zoe Lofgren  
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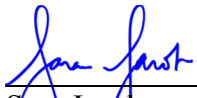
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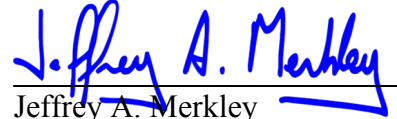
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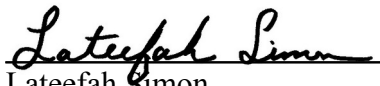
Adam B. Schiff  
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Sara Jacobs  
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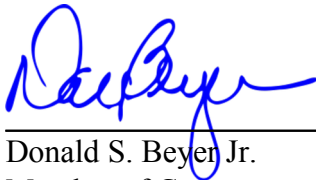
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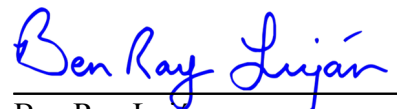
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Peter Welch  
United States Senator



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



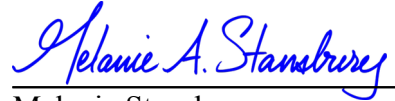
Cleo Fields  
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



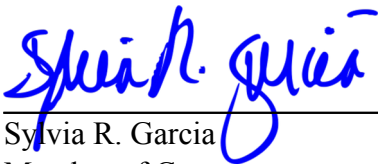
Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



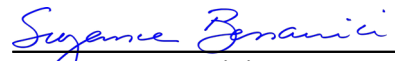
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Member of Congress



Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



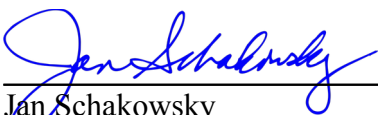
Ted W. Lieu  
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



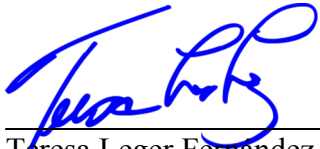
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

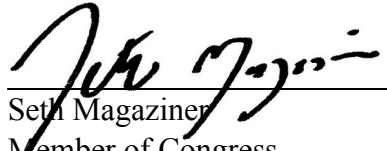


Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



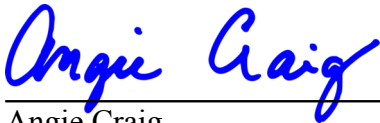
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Teresa Leger Fernandez  
Member of Congress



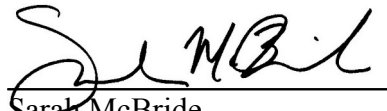
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Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



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Angie Craig  
Member of Congress  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Agriculture



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Sarah McBride  
Member of Congress