

GREENPEACE

July 20, 2004

Ann Veneman
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Gale Norton
Secretary
U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Madam Secretaries,

Greenpeace is contacting you to demand an immediate national moratorium on large-scale commercial logging and road construction on federal forests that are under the administration of the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Greenpeace believes that if this moratorium is not instituted immediately, the citizens of the United States will permanently lose ancient forests along with the many rights and benefits they bestow. The announcement last week by the Bush administration to dismantle the Roadless Rule is a further threat to our forests and an attempt to absolve the administration of their responsibility to manage and protect our forests for future generations.

Throughout our country's history, often with little understanding or forethought, America has divided up its landscape and transformed it to meet our material needs. The result is that today, large intact and connected natural ecosystems are increasingly rare. This is especially true of U.S. forestlands. Conservation biologists are in agreement that America's federal land areas are now too small to support healthy and diverse ecosystems. National Forests alone harbor 17 percent of the 1,200 listed threatened and endangered species in this country.

It is of paramount importance that the United States develop a comprehensive national forest conservation strategy and the place to begin is on our public lands. Nationwide, 85 percent of our old growth forest are gone. In the lower 48 states, less than 5 percent remains.

As I write this letter, the Greenpeace ship *Arctic Sunrise* is in Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest, America's largest national forest, meeting with stakeholders throughout the region to communicate the importance of rescuing this "crown jewel" of our National

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Forest System. Our ongoing investigations have only served to underscore the urgency for a moratorium. We have found disturbing signs that the last remaining “big-tree” forests are continuing to be logged even though so little remains.

We write to you so that you clearly understand that U.S. citizens (who own these forests) consider this situation extremely urgent. Logging continues in the Tongass and new sales are popping up that will lead to clearcutting in intact roadless areas. Meanwhile, the will of the American public is being ignored. Nearly 3,000,000 Americans commented in favor of protecting the last roadless areas in the United States and their voices have been ignored, twice.

The attached moratorium is a means to an end. It is a “time out,” a period to investigate the management of our public lands and an historic moment in our history for citizens to determine which Forest Service and BLM lands should receive increased protection. The Bush administration holds these lands in public trust for all citizens and future generations. It is directly accountable for their fate.

Greenpeace, along with our millions of supporters worldwide, are experiencing a huge sense of frustration. We feel that we have exhausted every avenue of communication to no avail. We have been in communication with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management for many months now and this letter represents one last attempt for a response from you.

Given the urgency of the present situation, we respectfully request you reply as soon as possible. Please contact Scott Paul, Forest Campaign Coordinator, at (202) 319 2469.

Sincerely,

John Passacantando
Executive Director

CC: Mark Rey
Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Kathleen Clarke
Director
Bureau of Land Management

Forrest Cole
Forest Supervisor for the Tongass National Forest
U.S. Forest Service