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ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE * AUDUBON ALASKA * THE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE *
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* SOUTHEAST ALASKA CONSERVATION COUNCIL * THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY *
WOMEN'S EARTH AND CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

Legislation is Critically Needed to Protect Threatened Roadless Areas in Alaska

Conservation groups voice strong support for reintroduction of Roadless Area Conservation Act on the 20th Anniversary of the publishing of the 2001 Roadless Rule

WASHINGTON — In response to today's bicameral introduction of the Roadless Area Conservation Act by Senator Maria Cantwell and Representatives Ruben Gallego and Diana DeGette, the following statement was released by the organizations listed above:

"The Roadless Rule is one of our nation's premier conservation accomplishments, protecting almost 60 million acres of treasured national forestlands and intact watersheds. In the face of efforts to weaken these safeguards, the Roadless Area Conservation Act is more important than ever for keeping our irreplaceable landscapes intact nationwide and especially where these landmark protections are threatened by the Trump administration in Alaska.

"This legislation preserves roadless areas for hunting and fishing, activities that support a subsistence lifestyle and define a way of life for many people living in rural forested areas. It will help reduce climate change impacts, protect imperiled species that rely upon Roadless areas for survival, and preserve special places that Native American and Alaska Native communities consider sacred. It supports outdoor recreation and tourism industries that thrive when forests are valued for their many ecological benefits and sets aside cherished places that millions of Americans visit for outdoor recreation and wildlife viewing.

"In introducing this legislation, Sen. Cantwell and Reps. Gallego and DeGette are not only working to keep these lands intact for future generations, but continuing to respect the more than 1.5 million people who voiced support for strong Roadless area protections during the original Roadless rulemaking process.

"This legislation exemplifies true federal leadership. We ask President-elect Biden to take immediate action to halt new old-growth timber sales and quickly restore the Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest, and to initiate a process to assess climate impacts and shift policy in the Tongass to align with federal climate goals as well as protect ecosystems, Indigenous and other frontline communities, and taxpayers."

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