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Alaska Roadless Rule Citizen Advisory Committee lacks recreation, tourism industry makeup

JUNEAU, AK - Members of Southeast Alaska's recreation and tourism industry, responsible for more than a quarter of Southeast Alaska's regional employment, are speaking out against the makeup of the Alaska Roadless Rule Citizen Advisory Committee, [announced late last week by the office of the Governor](#).

“Governor Walker’s recent appointments to the Alaska Roadless Rule Citizen Advisory Committee make it clear that sport anglers, hunters, outfitters and guides, tourism operators and recreation users on the Tongass are being shut out of the State’s process for discussing potential changes to the Roadless Rule,” said Mark Kaelke, Southeast Alaska program director for Trout Unlimited. “The committee is heavily slanted toward development interests in spite of the State’s agreement to convene ‘a diverse mix of state-specific interests’ to consider revisions to the rule.”

The State of Alaska has unsuccessfully litigated application of the Roadless Rule in Alaska since its inception in 2001. In January of this year, the State of Alaska formally petitioned the Department of Agriculture for a full exemption from the Roadless Rule for all roadless areas on federal lands in Alaska. In August, Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, responded to that petition with an invitation to convene a process to review the rule and consider Alaska-specific changes to it as has been done in Colorado and Idaho.

“This process is a waste of public funds to re-hash decisions and compromises already made by stakeholder groups better representing the true economic realities of Southeast,” said Kaelke. “It will now once again be incumbent on tourism operators, hunters and anglers and outfitter/guides to rally their supporters and weigh in during the scoping comment process and public comment portions of the committee meetings.”

Fishing and tourism account for 26 percent of all employment in Southeast Alaska and contribute roughly \$2 billion to the local economy. These industries rely significantly on Roadless Areas for their abundant fish, wildlife, and beautiful scenery. Scoping comments on the revision process are due by October 15, 2018 and [may be submitted electronically at this link](#).

The first meeting of the Roadless Revision Committee will take place at the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council from 10:00-5:00 on Tuesday, October 2 and from 8:00-4:00 on Wednesday. Meetings are open to the public and public comment will be accepted from 2:45-3:45 Wednesday.

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Trout Unlimited is the nation’s oldest and largest coldwater fisheries conservation organization. In Alaska, we work with sportsmen and women to ensure the state’s trout and salmon resources remain healthy far into the future through our local chapters and offices in Anchorage and Juneau. Follow TU’s Tongass efforts on [Facebook](#), and visit us online at [tu.org](#). Learn more about our work to conserve key areas of the Tongass National Forest at [www.americansalmonforest.org](#)