



Thousands of Alaskans sign onto letter requesting public lands remain in the public trust

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(SitNews) - Today, thousands of business owners, guides, outfitters, hunters and anglers who support conserving and maintaining access to public lands released a letter urging Alaska's congressional representatives and the Trump Administration to keep public lands in the public trust while celebrating the many uses of the Tongass National Forest.

The letter states: "As individuals that depend on access to abundant natural resources, we believe the Tongass National Forest must continue to be managed by the U.S. Forest Service on a multiple-use basis. We stand together in opposition to any effort to transfer management or ownership of Federal public lands in Southeast Alaska to State or private entities [and] any proposals that threaten to unreasonably restrict public access or would harm fish and game populations by eliminating essential federal conservation designations and measures, such as the Tongass 77."

At its core, the letter expresses concern that transferring public lands into private hands will harm the resource-based economy and culture of Southeast Alaska. However, many signers participated as a celebration of their support for the numerous uses and benefits of the Tongass National Forest.

"The Tongass is open to all of us to use and enjoy. Visitors have once-in-a-lifetime experiences here, locals fill their freezers with game and fish from the Tongass, and business owners rely on the land and water for their livelihoods," said Dan Blanchard, Captain and CEO of Uncruise Adventures. "We're not only opposed to privatization of the public places we love, we're also signing in celebration of all the Tongass gives us. We want the Tongass to be around forever."

The letter highlights that public lands drive the private-sector economy of Southeast Alaska, by creating more than \$2 billion in economic contribution and 25% of all jobs in the region annually.

On the Web:

Read the letter, list of signers, or to sign the letter
<http://www.americansalmonforest.org/public-lands-sign-on-supporters.html>



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