

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

July 26, 2010

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall and Ranking Member Hastings:

As the leaders of the House Natural Resources Committee, you and your staff may soon begin to assemble an omnibus public lands bill that will protect many acres of public land and greatly benefit current and future generations of Americans. The undersigned Members of the U.S. House of Representatives look forward to supporting this important legislation. However, we would like to take this opportunity to urge you and your committee not to include H.R. 2099, the Southeast Alaska Native Land Entitlement Finalization Act, in any public lands package.


The Tongass National Forest is truly a gem of our nation's public lands system. As America's rainforest it supports flourishing populations of bears, bald eagles, whales, and salmon. The Tongass serves as a cost-effective tool for storing and sequestering carbon, and supports a diverse regional economy that boasts thriving commercial fishing, as well as world class outdoor recreation.

H.R. 2099 would severely threaten the economic and ecological well-being of the Tongass. The impact this legislation would have on the forest has stirred great controversy, regionally and nationally. If H.R. 2099 were included in an omnibus lands bill, Congress would be giving the green light to the industrial clear-cutting of the best remaining old growth in the United States. We believe it has no place in a legislative package meant to protect our nation's natural heritage. Protecting the Tongass, an incredible national resource, so that future generations of Americans can enjoy it should be a Congressional priority.

We appreciate your attention to this important issue and look forward to supporting your efforts on an omnibus public lands bill.

Sincerely,


ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress


RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress


MAZIE K. HIRONO
Member of Congress


JARED POLIS
Member of Congress


LLOYD DOGGETT
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ROBERT E. ANDREWS
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Member of Congress


JOHN W. OLVER
Member of Congress


ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress


LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
Member of Congress


BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

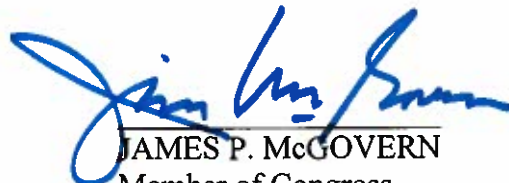

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DONNA F. EDWARDS
Member of Congress


MIKE QUIGLEY
Member of Congress

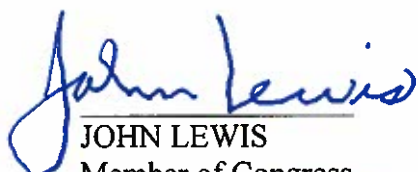

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Member of Congress

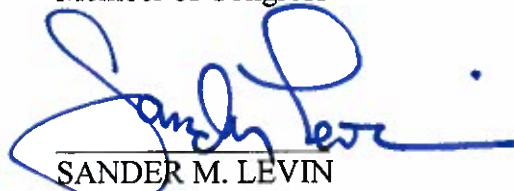

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ADAM B. SCHIFF
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SANDER M. LEVIN
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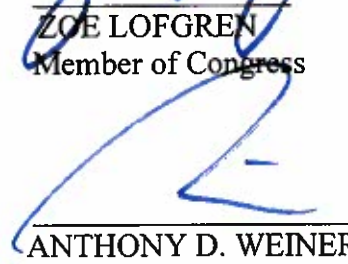
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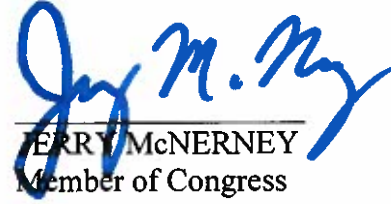
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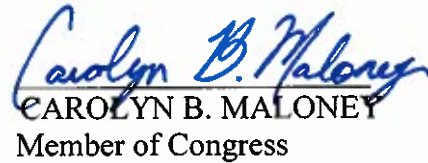
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