

From: [Gary Paxton \(Assembly\)](#)  
To: [andrew.thoms](#)  
Cc: [Hugh Bevan](#); [Sara Peterson](#)  
Subject: Re: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule  
Date: Monday, November 25, 2019 8:55:45 AM

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*“Protecting the natural environment of the Tongass while supporting the development of sustainable communities in Southeast Alaska – since 1967.”*

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Greetings from Sitka, Alaska. I wanted to share a copy of the Sitka newspaper from Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. There are a bunch of articles on activities that the Sitka Conservation Society is working on and I wanted to make sure it was on your radar and express some of the difficulties and frustrations we have right now.

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There is a lot of tension and anxiety on these issues right now in Southeast Alaska. My frustration and the issue I want to express to you is the difficulty that I am having balancing the work we do collaborating across stakeholder groups (Tongass Advisory Committee, Tongass Transition Collaborative, Roadless Rule Advisory Committee) while also getting support and buy-in from the grassroots stakeholders, business owners, and other SE Alaska civic organizations. We've gone way out on a limb trying to find ways to keep a viable timber industry, create a collaborative environment where entities are willing to work in a “compromise” space, and build relationships where we can work together to create a common-ground future for our region and the State. The Roadless Rule Repeal effort is becoming a huge distraction, waste of time, waste of resources, and massive generator of conflict. It has become an obstacle and, as a community leader with 14 years of experience working on USDA policies, investments, and other rural development initiatives in Southeast Alaska, I can tell you that there are no projects or initiatives that repealing the Roadless rule will make possible that are currently unable to proceed. There is an ample list of projects that are allowed and a suite of projects that have been granted exemptions. The limiting factor for projects is the economics of doing them—not the roadless regulation.

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I'm writing because your office plays a critical role in all these issues. I know that it is simpler to look at issues at a very broad scale and reduce them to black-and-white simplicities. The reality here in Southeast Alaska is that it is much greyer, there are more complexities, and that we need support for you and your staff to support our efforts in that more complex space. The whole roadless rule alternative 6 preferred alternative just feels like we've kicked a hornets nest that could have been left there and it would have been fine to just avoid it.

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Sincerely,

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Andrew Thoms



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Cc: [Hugh Bevan](#); [Sara Peterson](#)  
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**To:** [Hugh Bevan](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Roadless rule  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 26, 2019 7:58:45 AM

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>> I'm forwarding you a press release on where the Delegation stands on the Roadless Rule.

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>>

>> Dana Herndon

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>> Delegation Representative

>> U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

>> U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

>> Juneau/Northern SE Delegation Office

>> 800 Glacier Avenue Ste. 101

>> Juneau, Alaska 99801

>> Phone: 907-586-7277

>> <https://www.murkowski.senate.gov>

>>

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**Cc:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2019 9:06:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [draft letter for Mayor Paxton.docx](#)  
[SCS letter to Senator Murkowski.pdf](#)

---

Hugh and Gary:

Here is the letter we sent. Also attached is a letter with some language I drafted up that you all can use.

Please let me know how I can help.

Andrew

Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director  
[Sitka Conservation Society](#)  
Box 6533 Sitka, Alaska 99835  
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Dear Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of the City of Sitka, we would like to pass along the attached resolution that the City of Sitka recently passed. Our community is very concerned about the way that the Roadless Rule process has become a lightning rod. We believe that it is not the best use of time or resources and that it will not solve the key issues that need to be dealt with regarding Tongass National Forest Management. We do have concerns about some Tongass issues and there is a whole suite of investments and management needs that would benefit and expand opportunities for Sitka's residents, businesses, and visitors. We would greatly appreciate your offices help and assistance on those issues and we will look forward to working with you and your staff to accomplish those.

We would also like to call your attention to the collaborative work and efforts that the Sitka Conservation Society has engaged in. As a member of the Federal Advisory Committee nominated by the Secretary of Agriculture to create the current Tongass Land Management Plan, the Sitka Conservation Society has strived to create collaborative options and solutions for moving beyond conflict on the Tongass to accomplish multiuse land management. They have worked close with the timber industry to develop implementation recommendations that provide a roadmap for long-term Tongass management that provides opportunities for a timber industry, invests in salmon fisheries production and conservation of the most important stream systems, and charts a course for investments to benefit the visitor industry and outfitter/guide permittees.

Sitka is experiencing a rapid growth in demand for visitor industry services. We highly value the staff and investments in our local Ranger District but also recognize a need for increased investment to respond to growing demand. The permit administration that we have here locally does more than just compile paperwork: they find a way to make sure the guides and outfitters don't all overlap in the same places and can provide visitors with a unique and valuable experience. This is critically important for the bear hunting guides, fly fishing guides, and high-end small cruise ships that operate out of Sitka's harbor system.

We also have needs on the Sitka district to complete restoration efforts on watersheds logged before salmon stream protections were in place where salmon spawning habitat has been damaged and is producing less salmon than its full potential. We also have stream culverts that need replacing that are currently blocking salmon passage. There is also a dire need to get the Pre-Commercial Thinning program back to full operation and meeting its targets (this past year, there were no acres of Pre-commercial thinning completed because of issues across multiple federal agencies).

We would call your attention to the enclosed letter that the Sitka Conservation Society recently sent to your office and an example of the issues, concerns, and opportunities that the Sitka Conservation Society is tracking and working on with many community and regional stakeholders, tribes, and municipalities.

Sincerely,



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**Subject:** RE: Roadless rule  
**Date:** Monday, November 25, 2019 4:51:00 PM

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>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Gary Paxton (Assembly) <[assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org)>

> Sent: Monday, November 25, 2019 3:28 PM

> To: Herndon, Dana (Murkowski) <[Dana\\_Herndon@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:Dana_Herndon@murkowski.senate.gov)>

> Cc: Hugh Bevan <[hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org](mailto:hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org)>

> Subject: Re: Roadless rule

>

> Got it, thanks. Andrew Thoms, director of Sitka Conservation Society, says he is trying to work with delegation on options short of complete reversal of the roadless rule which is politically charged and gets support from national environmental activists. I would love to get rid of the roadless rule for Alaska, but would also support a compromise if achievable. Any advice? Dana, again thanks for your help/advise. Pax

>

> Gary Paxton

> Mayor, City of Sitka

>

>> On Nov 25, 2019, at 1:16 PM, Herndon, Dana (Murkowski) <[Dana\\_Herndon@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:Dana_Herndon@murkowski.senate.gov)> wrote:

>>

>> Hi Mayor,

>> I'm forwarding you a press release on where the Delegation stands on the Roadless Rule.

>>

>>

>> Dana Herndon

>>

>> Delegation Representative

>> U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

>> U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

>> Juneau/Northern SE Delegation Office

>> 800 Glacier Avenue Ste. 101

>> Juneau, Alaska 99801

>> Phone: 907-586-7277

>> <https://www.murkowski.senate.gov>

>>

>>

>>

>> -----Original Message-----

>> From: Gary Paxton (Assembly) <assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org>

>> Sent: Sunday, November 24, 2019 12:23 PM

>> To: Herndon, Dana (Murkowski) <Dana\_Herndon@murkowski.senate.gov>

>> Subject: Roadless rule

>>

>> Dana, what is the delegation`s position on the roadless issue? Would like an answer before Tuesday night`s assembly meeting. Thanks, Pax

>>

>> Gary Paxton

>> Mayor, City of Sitka

**From:** [Gary Paxton \(Assembly\)](#)  
**To:** [Hugh Bevan](#)  
**Cc:** [Sara Peterson](#); [john.m.leach@icloud.com](mailto:john.m.leach@icloud.com)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 26, 2019 12:06:45 PM  
**Attachments:** [ATT00001.htm](#)  
[draft letter for Mayor Paxton.docx](#)  
[ATT00002.htm](#)  
[SCS letter to Senator Murkowski.pdf](#)  
[ATT00003.htm](#)

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On Andrew`s suggested endorsement of his letter to Murkowski my edit follows; eliminate first paragraph and use this instead; Andrew Thoms director of the SCS is working on some options short of exempting Alaska from the roadless rule which is politically charged and difficult to change. Some of his efforts are in the attached letter to your office. We encourage your support of these efforts to at least provide some improvements to multi use of the Tonga`s.

This might be sufficient, or we can include some of the input he has in the other paragraphs, your call.

PS, John, I am supportive of the delegation`s desire to get Alaska exempt from the roadless rule and let alaskan`s determine their own destiny, but as you see many Sitkan`s have a different view.

Hugh, I believe you should sign the endorsement for assembly review and approval. That assumes you agree. Pax. PSS, to be determined after tonight.

Gary Paxton  
Mayor, City of Sitka

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "andrew thoms" <[andrew@sitkawild.org](mailto:andrew@sitkawild.org)>  
**Date:** November 25, 2019 at 9:06:44 PM AKST  
**To:** "Gary Paxton \((Assembly)\)" <[assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org)>, "Hugh Bevan" <[hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org](mailto:hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Cc:** "Sara Peterson" <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Subject:** **RE: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule**

Hugh and Gary:

Here is the letter we sent. Also attached is a letter with some language I drafted up that you all can use.

Please let me know how I can help.

Andrew

Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director  
[Sitka Conservation Society](#)  
Box 6533 Sitka, Alaska 99835  
SCS Office: Phone: (907)747 7509 Fax: (907)747 6105  
email: [andrew@sitkawild.org](mailto:andrew@sitkawild.org) Web: [www.sitkawild.org](http://www.sitkawild.org)



Dear Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of the City of Sitka, we would like to pass along the attached resolution that the City of Sitka recently passed. Our community is very concerned about the way that the Roadless Rule process has become a lightning rod. We believe that it is not the best use of time or resources and that it will not solve the key issues that need to be dealt with regarding Tongass National Forest Management. We do have concerns about some Tongass issues and there is a whole suite of investments and management needs that would benefit and expand opportunities for Sitka's residents, businesses, and visitors. We would greatly appreciate your offices help and assistance on those issues and we will look forward to working with you and your staff to accomplish those.

We would also like to call your attention to the collaborative work and efforts that the Sitka Conservation Society has engaged in. As a member of the Federal Advisory Committee nominated by the Secretary of Agriculture to create the current Tongass Land Management Plan, the Sitka Conservation Society has strived to create collaborative options and solutions for moving beyond conflict on the Tongass to accomplish multiuse land management. They have worked close with the timber industry to develop implementation recommendations that provide a roadmap for long-term Tongass management that provides opportunities for a timber industry, invests in salmon fisheries production and conservation of the most important stream systems, and charts a course for investments to benefit the visitor industry and outfitter/guide permittees.

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We would call your attention to the enclosed letter that the Sitka Conservation Society recently sent to your office and an example of the issues, concerns, and opportunities that the Sitka Conservation Society is tracking and working on with many community and regional stakeholders, tribes, and municipalities.

Sincerely,





**Sitka Conservation Society**  
**Box 6533**  
**Sitka, Alaska 99835**  
**(907) 747-7509**  
**info@sitkawild.org**  
**www.sitkawild.org**

*“Protecting the natural  
environment of the Tongass while  
supporting the development of  
sustainable communities in  
Southeast Alaska – since 1967.”*

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Greetings from Sitka, Alaska. I wanted to share a copy of the Sitka newspaper from Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. There are a bunch of articles on activities that the Sitka Conservation Society is working on and I wanted to make sure it was on your radar and express some of the difficulties and frustrations we have right now.

The main article I'll call your attention to is on a presentation I gave to the Sitka Chamber of Commerce. I outlined all of work seeking to find ways to create rural economic development while benefitting from and conserving the natural environment and ensuring that the ecological conditions that support the industries of our members (fishermen, hunting/fishing guides, subsistence resource users, small business owners, small mill owners) are preserved. Our members gathered at our wild foods potluck that weekend and we filled our Centennial Hall with over 300 people bringing in the bounty of the Tongass's lands and waters (2<sup>nd</sup> article). The third article is of a group of Sitkans who are so angry about the roadless rule and the politics involved that they demonstrated in front of the local district offices “in support of Forest Service staff but against Roadless Rule changes.” These articles follow the article from the night before reporting on the 3 hours of testimony from Sitkans on not wanting the Roadless Rule changed and their fears on what it would mean for their subsistence use of Tongass resources.

There is a lot of tension and anxiety on these issues right now in Southeast Alaska. My frustration and the issue I want to express to you is the difficulty that I am having balancing the work we do collaborating across stakeholder groups (Tongass Advisory Committee, Tongass Transition Collaborative, Roadless Rule Advisory Committee) while also getting support and buy-in from the grassroots stakeholders, business owners, and other SE Alaska civic organizations. We've gone way out on a limb trying to find ways to keep a viable timber industry, create a collaborative environment where entities are willing to work in a “compromise” space, and build relationships where we can work together to create a common-ground future for our region and the State. The Roadless Rule Repeal effort is becoming a huge distraction, waste of time, waste of resources, and massive generator of conflict. It has become an obstacle and, as a community leader with 14 years of experience working on USDA policies, investments, and other rural development initiatives in Southeast Alaska, I can tell you that there are no projects or initiatives that repealing the Roadless rule will make possible that are currently unable to proceed. There is an ample list of projects that are allowed and a suite of projects that have been granted exemptions. The limiting factor for projects is the economics of doing them—not the roadless regulation.

In terms of timber—the actual sticking point on this process, opportunities for old growth were outlined in the State Advisory Committee process on a subset of lands that would have been of very limited conflict. Our recommendations could have solved this once-and-for-all and negated the sky-is-falling rhetoric on the extremes of each side. I worked hard to build the space for that opportunity and I was very eager to put our time and focus on implementing the

projects that actual result in economic opportunities, community viability, better Forest Service project implementation, viable long-term timber opportunities, and conservation of core ecological priority areas in ways that they also generate economic outputs.

Instead, the path that was chosen was full exemption and now the extreme voices have been empowered. The path forward will be dominated by lawsuits and attorneys and National groups will be using the Tongass as a poster child. It will be harder for me to build collaboration and create projects and investments that bring entities together for a stronger communities and region. The Forest Service will have to deal with the distraction and public scrutiny of lawsuits which will take valuable staff resources away from getting projects going on-the-ground. This will take away the energy and financial resources that we'll need to actually make projects happen, overcome the obstacles, change the nuts-and-bolts policies and procedures that are hampering/delaying projects, and fully staff the programs that are doing the work that is in demand and urgently needed right now.

I'm writing because your office plays a critical role in all these issues. I know that it is simpler to look at issues at a very broad scale and reduce them to black-and-white simplicities. The reality here in Southeast Alaska is that it is much greyer, there are more complexities, and that we need support for you and your staff to support our efforts in that more complex space. The whole roadless rule alternative 6 preferred alternative just feels like we've kicked a hornets nest that could have been left there and it would have been fine to just avoid it.

I don't how much space there will be in the next year to work in this space. We'll be trying. After the article and my Chamber of Commerce talk, the feedback I got from all sides was basically, "why are you trying to work with the timber industry, it is a losing proposition. We need to focus on other stuff and we need to make our district's priorities heard." I do have a forest management background and I am a wood-worker. There is space for timber harvest on the Tongass—but it will never be the boom industry or core economic driver that it once was. If it is going to be successful, we will all need to be working together to make the space for it to be viable--- there are management activities and investments that need to be made now to make the industry viable 10 years from now. I would encourage your office to support us here in the region on that work, and move away from the issues that put the Tongass in national headlines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andrew Thoms".

Andrew Thoms

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-26A**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA SUPPORTING THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE IN THE ALASKA ROADLESS RULEMAKING PROCESS**

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka expands across Baranof Island and a portion of West Chichagof Island and contains extensive local use areas on Northern Baranof Island, Hoonah Sound, Kruzof Island, and islands throughout Sitka Sound; and,

**WHEREAS**, the sustainability of the future of Sitka's economy, the livelihoods of our citizens, the visitor industry and the commercial fishing industry are highly dependent on a pristine and productive natural setting throughout Southeast Alaska; and,

**WHEREAS**, salmon populations are facing increased challenges from changing ocean conditions, climate change, ocean acidification, rising water temperatures in streams, and ocean warming events in the Pacific Ocean, and freshwater habitat development in the contiguous United States; and,

**WHEREAS**, the approximate combined economic value of Southeast Alaska's ports, including commercial fishing, tourism, recreation, scientific research, fisheries enhancement and community subsistence totals over \$2 billion annually; and,

**WHEREAS**, Southeast Alaska is the most visited region in Alaska, with two-thirds of all visitors to the State coming to this region and therefore acting as a significant contribution to the local and regional economy; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Roadless Rule, first adopted in 2001, was widely supported then, and now overwhelmingly supported throughout Southeast Alaska, to protect 58 million acres of our nation's most essential and intact roadless areas in the National Forest system; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee opposed the Roadless exemption by supporting the no action alternative 1 without opposition at its November 13, 2019 meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, at a recent public comment session in Sitka with over 100 in attendance and 41 given testimony's, 100% in favor of supporting a no action alternative 1; and

**WHEREAS**, roadless areas on the Tongass are essential to Southeast Alaska's way of life and represent some of the most spectacular and unique roadless areas anywhere in the National Forest System that support hunting, fishing, customary and traditional uses, unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities, and opportunities for businesses; and,

**WHEREAS**, the amount of carbon stored in the intact old growth forests and soils of the Tongass National Forest represent one of the highest carbon stores in the world, and the conservation of intact roadless areas and old growth forests on the Tongass are essential for maintaining local and national climate resilience and slowing down climate change throughout the world; and,

**WHEREAS**, increased logging of old growth forests in existing roadless areas would incur a significant cost to taxpayers, as new reports estimate that the subsidization of logging on the

Tongass has cost taxpayers over \$600 million over the past twenty years, and the State of Alaska's own economic analysis states Tongass timber will be fundamentally uncompetitive on the world market; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka has passed multiple resolutions in support of the the aforementioned Transition and revised Tongass Land Management Plan, including Resolution 2010-18, in Support of the USDA Transition Framework, and Resolution 2013-10, a Resolution of the City and Borough of Sitka Supporting Amendments to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) 2008 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to Facilitate the Development of Adequate and Reliable Sources of Renewable Energy for Sitka and Southeast Alaska; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka believes that the resources and time of the Forest Service is better spent improving and streamlining existing permitting process for projects in inventoried roadless areas without pursuing an exemption;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the City and Borough of Sitka strongly supports lasting protection for all inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest as provided for in the 2001 Roadless Rule alternative 1; and

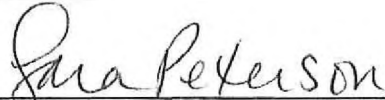
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the economic livelihoods of Sitka residents would be irreparably harmed by the effects of any exemption from the Roadless Rule on the Tongass, which would lead to increased climate change, increased threats to fish habitat, and development occurring in pristine natural areas that showcase the tourism potential and natural beauty of the Tongass National Forest; and,

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the City and Borough of Sitka encourages the USFS to invest in programs, workforce development, and employment opportunities for Southeast Alaskan residents to restore the health and productivity of the Tongass National Forest's degraded watersheds and streams, as a means of supporting vital ecosystem services and economic opportunities such as carbon sequestration, small-scale timber production, fish and wildlife populations, natural vistas, visitor amenities, subsistence, hydrological resources, and more.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 26th day of November 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary L. Paxton, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Peterson, MMC  
Municipal Clerk

1<sup>st</sup> and final reading as amended 11/26/2019

Sponsors: Knox/Eisenbeisz

**From:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**To:** [Gary Paxton \(Assembly\)](#); [Hugh Bevan](#)  
**Cc:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 27, 2019 8:23:08 AM  
**Attachments:** [Roadless Rule.doc](#)

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Gary,

I made your requested changes to Andrew's draft letter for Hugh's signature. See attached. I've also done a copy/paste of the letter below:

November 27, 2019

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Andrew Thoms, Director of the Sitka Conservation Society, is working on some options short of exempting Alaska from the Roadless Rule, which is politically charged and difficult to change.

We would like to call your attention to the collaborative work and efforts that the Sitka Conservation Society has engaged in. As a member of the Federal Advisory Committee nominated by the Secretary of Agriculture to create the current Tongass Land Management Plan, the Sitka Conservation Society has strived to create collaborative options and solutions for moving beyond conflict on the Tongass to accomplish multiuse land management. They have worked close with the timber industry to develop implementation recommendations that provide a roadmap for long-term Tongass management that provides opportunities for a timber industry, invests in salmon fisheries production and conservation of the most important stream systems, and charts a course for investments to benefit the visitor industry and outfitter/guide permittees.

Sitka is experiencing a rapid growth in demand for visitor industry services. We highly value the staff and investments in our local Ranger District but also recognize a need for increased investment to respond to growing demand. The permit administration that we have here locally does more than just compile paperwork: they find a way to make sure the guides and outfitters don't all overlap in the same places and can provide visitors with a unique and valuable experience. This is critically important for the bear hunting guides, fly fishing guides, and high-end small cruise ships that operate out of Sitka's harbor system.

We also have needs on the Sitka district to complete restoration efforts on watersheds logged before salmon stream protections were in place where salmon spawning habitat has been damaged and is producing less salmon than its full potential. We also have stream culverts that need replacing that are currently blocking salmon passage. There is also a dire need to get the Pre-Commercial Thinning program back to full operation and meeting its targets (this past year, there were no acres of Pre-commercial thinning completed because of issues across multiple federal agencies).

We would call your attention to the enclosed letter that the Sitka Conservation Society recently sent to your office and an example of the issues, concerns, and opportunities that the Sitka Conservation Society is tracking and working on with many community and regional stakeholders, tribes, and municipalities.

Sincerely,

Hugh Bevan

Interim Municipal Administrator

---

**From:** Gary Paxton (Assembly) <assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 26, 2019 12:07 PM  
**To:** Hugh Bevan <hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org>

**Cc:** Sara Peterson <sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org>; john.m.leach@icloud.com

**Subject:** Fwd: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule

On Andrew`s suggested endorsement of his letter to Murkowski my edit follows; eliminate first paragraph and use this instead; Andrew Thoms director of the SCS is working on some options short of exempting Alaska from the roadless rule which is politically charged and difficult to change. Some of his efforts are in the attached letter to your office. We encourage your support of these efforts to at least provide some improvements to multi use of the Tonga`s.

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PS, John, I am supportive of the delegation`s desire to get Alaska exempt from the roadless rule and let alaskan`s determine their own destiny, but as you see many Sitkan`s have a different view.

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**Cc:** "'Sara Peterson"' <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>

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Hugh and Gary:

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Please let me know how I can help.

Andrew

Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director  
[Sitka Conservation Society](http://Sitka Conservation Society)  
Box 6533 Sitka, Alaska 99835  
SCS Office: Phone:(907)747 7509 Fax: (907)747 6105  
email: [andrew@sitkawild.org](mailto:andrew@sitkawild.org) Web: [www.sitkawild.org](http://www.sitkawild.org)



# City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

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November 27, 2019

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Interim Municipal Administrator

From: Gary Paxton (Assembly) [assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org)

Date: Wednesday, November 27, 2019 (11:05 AM)

To: Larry Edwards <[larryedwards@gci.net](mailto:larryedwards@gci.net)> "andrew@sitkawild.org" <[andrew@sitkawild.org](mailto:andrew@sitkawild.org)>

Subj: Request for a copy of the letter you mentioned

Andrew. Patty would like a copy of your letter. My copy has interstaff stuff on it which is still in process. Pax

Gary Paxton

Mayor, City of Sitka

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> On Nov 27, 2019, at 10:17 AM, Larry Edwards <[larryedwards@gci.net](mailto:larryedwards@gci.net)> wrote:

> Hi Gary,

>

> At last night's meeting you mentioned a letter by Andrew Thoms that

> you will be working from, in order to bring something back for the

> Assembly's consideration. Can you please send me a copy of his letter?

>

> Thanks,

> -- Larry

>

> Larry Edwards

> Sitka, Ak

>



**From:** [Gary Paxton \(Assembly\)](#)  
**To:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**Cc:** [Hugh Bevan](#); [Renee Wheat](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 27, 2019 11:09:33 AM

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Sara, sounds good to me, if you and Hugh are happy, execute. Hugh, I want to restate I assume you are comfortable/supportive of this action. Pax

Gary Paxton  
Mayor, City of Sitka

On Nov 27, 2019, at 8:23 AM, Sara Peterson <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)> wrote:

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**Date:** November 25, 2019 at 9:06:44 PM AKST  
**To:** "'Gary Paxton \ (Assembly\)" <[assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assemblypaxton@cityofsitka.org)>, "'Hugh Bevan"' <[hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org](mailto:hugh.bevan@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Cc:** "'Sara Peterson"' <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Subject: RE: Letters to Senator Murkowski and Secretary Agriculture Sonny Perdue on the Roadless Rule**

Hugh and Gary:

Here is the letter we sent. Also attached is a letter with some language I drafted up that you all can use.

Please let me know how I can help.

Andrew

Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director  
Sitka Conservation Society  
Box 6533 Sitka, Alaska 99835  
SCS Office: Phone:(907)747 7509 Fax: (907)747 6105  
email: [andrew@sitkawild.org](mailto:andrew@sitkawild.org) Web: [www.sitkawild.org](http://www.sitkawild.org)

<Roadless Rule.doc>

November 29, 2019

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

RE: Alaska Roadless Rule

Dear Senator Murkowski,

Attached is Resolution NO. 2019-26A of the City and Borough of Sitka Assembly that was passed on November 26, 2019.

The Resolution supports Alternative 1 to the 2001 Roadless Rule.

We would call your attention to the collaborative work that Sitka Conservation Society (SCS) has championed. As a member of the Federal Advisory Committee nominated by the Secretary of Agriculture, SCS has strived to create collaborative options to achieve multiuse land management options for the Tongass National Forest.

Examples of these options are creating opportunities for a timber industry, investments in salmon fisheries enhancement and continuing to chart a course for investment by the visitor industries.

It will be through such multi-party collaborations that a balance can be struck that serves all parties well with Alaska's federal land management.

Thank you for all that you do for our State,

Hugh R. Bevan  
Interim Administrator

**From:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**To:** [Kristen Daimler-Nothdurft@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:Kristen_Daimler-Nothdurft@murkowski.senate.gov); [Kristen Daimler-Nothdurft@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:Kristen_Daimler-Nothdurft@murkowski.senate.gov)  
**Subject:** Roadless Rule - City and Borough of Sitka  
**Date:** Friday, November 29, 2019 1:20:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [20191129132624667.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon,

Attached please find a letter from Interim Municipal Administrator Hugh Bevan and CBS Assembly Resolution 2019-26A regarding the Roadless Rule. A hard copy will follow via USPS. I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I ate way too much. Time to hit the trails.

Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

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# City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

---

November 29, 2019

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Alaska Roadless Rule

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The Resolution supports Alternative 1 to the 2001 Roadless Rule.

We would call your attention to the collaborative work that Sitka Conservation Society (SCS) has championed. As a member of the Federal Advisory Committee nominated by the Secretary of Agriculture, SCS has strived to create collaborative options to achieve multiuse land management options for the Tongass National Forest.

Examples of these options are creating opportunities for a timber industry, investments in salmon fisheries enhancement and continuing to chart a course for investment by the visitor industries.

It will be through such multi-party collaborations that a balance can be struck that serves all parties well with Alaska's federal land management.

Thank you for all that you do for our State,

Hugh R. Bevan  
Interim Municipal Administrator

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-26A**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA SUPPORTING THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE IN THE ALASKA ROADLESS RULEMAKING PROCESS**

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka expands across Baranof Island and a portion of West Chichagof Island and contains extensive local use areas on Northern Baranof Island, Hoonah Sound, Kruzof Island, and islands throughout Sitka Sound; and,

**WHEREAS**, the sustainability of the future of Sitka's economy, the livelihoods of our citizens, the visitor industry and the commercial fishing industry are highly dependent on a pristine and productive natural setting throughout Southeast Alaska; and,

**WHEREAS**, salmon populations are facing increased challenges from changing ocean conditions, climate change, ocean acidification, rising water temperatures in streams, and ocean warming events in the Pacific Ocean, and freshwater habitat development in the contiguous United States; and,

**WHEREAS**, the approximate combined economic value of Southeast Alaska's ports, including commercial fishing, tourism, recreation, scientific research, fisheries enhancement and community subsistence totals over \$2 billion annually; and,

**WHEREAS**, Southeast Alaska is the most visited region in Alaska, with two-thirds of all visitors to the State coming to this region and therefore acting as a significant contribution to the local and regional economy; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Roadless Rule, first adopted in 2001, was widely supported then, and now overwhelmingly supported throughout Southeast Alaska, to protect 58 million acres of our nation's most essential and intact roadless areas in the National Forest system; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee opposed the Roadless exemption by supporting the no action alternative 1 without opposition at its November 13, 2019 meeting; and

**WHEREAS**, at a recent public comment session in Sitka with over 100 in attendance and 41 given testimony's, 100% in favor of supporting a no action alternative 1; and

**WHEREAS**, roadless areas on the Tongass are essential to Southeast Alaska's way of life and represent some of the most spectacular and unique roadless areas anywhere in the National Forest System that support hunting, fishing, customary and traditional uses, unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities, and opportunities for businesses; and,

**WHEREAS**, the amount of carbon stored in the intact old growth forests and soils of the Tongass National Forest represent one of the highest carbon stores in the world, and the conservation of intact roadless areas and old growth forests on the Tongass are essential for maintaining local and national climate resilience and slowing down climate change throughout the world; and,

**WHEREAS**, increased logging of old growth forests in existing roadless areas would incur a significant cost to taxpayers, as new reports estimate that the subsidization of logging on the

Tongass has cost taxpayers over \$600 million over the past twenty years, and the State of Alaska's own economic analysis states Tongass timber will be fundamentally uncompetitive on the world market; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka has passed multiple resolutions in support of the the aforementioned Transition and revised Tongass Land Management Plan, including Resolution 2010-18, in Support of the USDA Transition Framework, and Resolution 2013-10, a Resolution of the City and Borough of Sitka Supporting Amendments to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) 2008 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to Facilitate the Development of Adequate and Reliable Sources of Renewable Energy for Sitka and Southeast Alaska; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City and Borough of Sitka believes that the resources and time of the Forest Service is better spent improving and streamlining existing permitting process for projects in inventoried roadless areas without pursuing an exemption;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the City and Borough of Sitka strongly supports lasting protection for all inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest as provided for in the 2001 Roadless Rule alternative 1; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the economic livelihoods of Sitka residents would be irreparably harmed by the effects of any exemption from the Roadless Rule on the Tongass, which would lead to increased climate change, increased threats to fish habitat, and development occurring in pristine natural areas that showcase the tourism potential and natural beauty of the Tongass National Forest; and,

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that the City and Borough of Sitka encourages the USFS to invest in programs, workforce development, and employment opportunities for Southeast Alaskan residents to restore the health and productivity of the Tongass National Forest's degraded watersheds and streams, as a means of supporting vital ecosystem services and economic opportunities such as carbon sequestration, small-scale timber production, fish and wildlife populations, natural vistas, visitor amenities, subsistence, hydrological resources, and more.

**PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED** by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska on this 26th day of November 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary L. Paxton, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Peterson, MMC  
Municipal Clerk

1<sup>st</sup> and final reading as amended 11/26/2019

Sponsors: Knox/Eisenbeisz





Sitka Conservation Society  
Box 6533  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
(907) 747-7509  
info@sitkawild.org  
www.sitkawild.org

*“Protecting the natural  
environment of the Tongass while  
supporting the development of  
sustainable communities in  
Southeast Alaska – since 1967.”*

November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Greetings from Sitka, Alaska. I wanted to share a copy of the Sitka newspaper from Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. There are a bunch of articles on activities that the Sitka Conservation Society is working on and I wanted to make sure it was on your radar and express some of the difficulties and frustrations we have right now.

The main article I'll call your attention to is on a presentation I gave to the Sitka Chamber of Commerce. I outlined all of work seeking to find ways to create rural economic development while benefitting from and conserving the natural environment and ensuring that the ecological conditions that support the industries of our members (fishermen, hunting/fishing guides, subsistence resource users, small business owners, small mill owners) are preserved. Our members gathered at our wild foods potluck that weekend and we filled our Centennial Hall with over 300 people bringing in the bounty of the Tongass's lands and waters (2<sup>nd</sup> article). The third article is of a group of Sitkans who are so angry about the roadless rule and the politics involved that they demonstrated in front of the local district offices “in support of Forest Service staff but against Roadless Rule changes.” These articles follow the article from the night before reporting on the 3 hours of testimony from Sitkans on not wanting the Roadless Rule changed and their fears on what it would mean for their subsistence use of Tongass resources.

There is a lot of tension and anxiety on these issues right now in Southeast Alaska. My frustration and the issue I want to express to you is the difficulty that I am having balancing the work we do collaborating across stakeholder groups (Tongass Advisory Committee, Tongass Transition Collaborative, Roadless Rule Advisory Committee) while also getting support and buy-in from the grassroots stakeholders, business owners, and other SE Alaska civic organizations. We've gone way out on a limb trying to find ways to keep a viable timber industry, create a collaborative environment where entities are willing to work in a “compromise” space, and build relationships where we can work together to create a common-ground future for our region and the State. The Roadless Rule Repeal effort is becoming a huge distraction, waste of time, waste of resources, and massive generator of conflict. It has become an obstacle and, as a community leader with 14 years of experience working on USDA policies, investments, and other rural development initiatives in Southeast Alaska, I can tell you that there are no projects or initiatives that repealing the Roadless rule will make possible that are currently unable to proceed. There is an ample list of projects that are allowed and a suite of projects that have been granted exemptions. The limiting factor for projects is the economics of doing them—not the roadless regulation.

In terms of timber—the actual sticking point on this process, opportunities for old growth were outlined in the State Advisory Committee process on a subset of lands that would have been of very limited conflict. Our recommendations could have solved this once-and-for-all and negated the sky-is-falling rhetoric on the extremes of each side. I worked hard to build the space for that opportunity and I was very eager to put our time and focus on implementing the

projects that actually result in economic opportunities, community viability, better Forest Service project implementation, viable long-term timber opportunities, and conservation of core ecological priority areas in ways that they also generate economic outputs.

Instead, the path that was chosen was full exemption and now the extreme voices have been empowered. The path forward will be dominated by lawsuits and attorneys and National groups will be using the Tongass as a poster child. It will be harder for me to build collaboration and create projects and investments that bring entities together for a stronger communities and region. The Forest Service will have to deal with the distraction and public scrutiny of lawsuits which will take valuable staff resources away from getting projects going on-the-ground. This will take away the energy and financial resources that we'll need to actually make projects happen, overcome the obstacles, change the nuts-and-bolts policies and procedures that are hampering/delaying projects, and fully staff the programs that are doing the work that is in demand and urgently needed right now.

I'm writing because your office plays a critical role in all these issues. I know that it is simpler to look at issues at a very broad scale and reduce them to black-and-white simplicities. The reality here in Southeast Alaska is that it is much greyer, there are more complexities, and that we need support for you and your staff to support our efforts in that more complex space. The whole roadless rule alternative 6 preferred alternative just feels like we've kicked a hornets nest that could have been left there and it would have been fine to just avoid it.

I don't know how much space there will be in the next year to work in this space. We'll be trying. After the article and my Chamber of Commerce talk, the feedback I got from all sides was basically, "why are you trying to work with the timber industry, it is a losing proposition. We need to focus on other stuff and we need to make our district's priorities heard." I do have a forest management background and I am a wood-worker. There is space for timber harvest on the Tongass—but it will never be the boom industry or core economic driver that it once was. If it is going to be successful, we will all need to be working together to make the space for it to be viable--- there are management activities and investments that need to be made now to make the industry viable 10 years from now. I would encourage your office to support us here in the region on that work, and move away from the issues that put the Tongass in national headlines.

Sincerely,



Andrew Thoms

**From:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**To:** ["Larry Markley \(LarryMarkleyAK@aol.com\)"](#)  
**Subject:** 2019-11-29 Murkowski Roadless Rule Letter  
**Date:** Friday, November 29, 2019 1:26:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [20191129132624667.pdf](#)

---

Good afternoon Larry,

Attached please find Hugh's letter, Assembly Resolution 2019-26A and Sitka Conservation Society's letter regarding the Roadless Rule that was emailed and mailed to Senator Murkowski today. I hope you enjoyed your Thanksgiving holiday!

Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

Messages to and from this email address may be available to the public under Alaska Public Records Law.

**From:** [Linda Behnken](#)  
**To:** [Kevin Knox \(Assembly\)](#)  
**Subject:** Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2019 8:26:30 PM

---

Hi Kevin,

I was talking a contact in one of our delegations office who told me that Sullivan's office thinks Sitka opposed the roadless rule status quo alternative based on Gary Paxton's extensive "thank yous" to our Senators for launching the process to roll back the roadless rule. The same staffer had never seen the Sitka Resolution. DO you have a signed copy? Can you send it to me to provide to Sullivan and Murkowski's staffers? Also- Can you make sure the City has sent it to our entire delegation?

Thank you!  
Linda behnken

**From:** [Kevin Knox \(Assembly\)](#)  
**To:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 17, 2019 8:34:59 PM

---

We sent to the delegation? I really hope that Gary hasn't been communicating something different!

Kevin

Kevin Knox  
City and Borough of Sitka Assembly  
PO Box 6415  
Sitka, AK 99835

907.738.4664

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Linda Behnken <alfafishak@gmail.com>  
**Date:** December 17, 2019 at 8:26:30 PM AKST  
**To:** "Kevin Knox (Assembly)" <assemblyknox@cityofsitka.org>  
**Subject: Roadless Rule**

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Thank you!  
Linda behnken

**From:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**To:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**Subject:** RE: 2019-11-29 Murkowski Roadless Rule Letter  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2019 8:21:00 AM

---

Great, thanks. I'll let Kevin know. Please email the resolution to Representative Young and Senator Sullivan as well.

-----Original Message-----

From: Renee Wheat <[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)>  
Sent: Wednesday, December 18, 2019 8:19 AM  
To: Sara Peterson <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>  
Subject: FW: 2019-11-29 Murkowski Roadless Rule Letter

Sara,

The attached was emailed and mailed to Senator Murkowski on November 29.

Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

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-----Original Message-----

From: Renee Wheat  
Sent: Friday, November 29, 2019 1:27 PM  
To: Sara Peterson <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>; Melissa Henshaw <[melissa.henshaw@cityofsitka.org](mailto:melissa.henshaw@cityofsitka.org)>  
Subject: 2019-11-29 Murkowski Roadless Rule Letter

Good morning,

Attached please find Hugh's letter, Assembly Resolution 2019-26A and Sitka Conservation Society's letter regarding the Roadless Rule that was emailed and mailed to Senator Murkowski today. I forwarded it to Hugh who will send it to Mayor Paxton. I will email it to Larry Markley and Andrew Thoms.

Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

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**From:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**To:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2019 7:51:34 AM  
**Attachments:** [Res 2019-26A Signed.pdf](#)

---

Please remind me who the resolution and letters were sent to so I can report back to Kevin?

If it wasn't sent to our entire Congressional Delegation, please send.

---

**From:** Kevin Knox (Assembly) <[assemblyknox@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assemblyknox@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 17, 2019 8:35 PM  
**To:** Sara Peterson <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Roadless Rule

We sent to the delegation? I really hope that Gary hasn't been communicating something different!

Kevin

Kevin Knox  
City and Borough of Sitka Assembly  
PO Box 6415  
Sitka, AK 99835

907.738.4664

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**To:** "Kevin Knox (Assembly)" <[assemblyknox@cityofsitka.org](mailto:assemblyknox@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Subject:** Roadless Rule

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Thank you!  
Linda behnken



**From:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**To:** [Sara Peterson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 2019-11-29 Murkowski Roadless Rule Letter  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2019 8:18:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [20191129132624667.pdf](#)

---

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Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

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-----Original Message-----

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**Sent:** Friday, November 29, 2019 1:27 PM  
**To:** Sara Peterson <[sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org](mailto:sara.peterson@cityofsitka.org)>; Melissa Henshaw <[melissa.henshaw@cityofsitka.org](mailto:melissa.henshaw@cityofsitka.org)>  
**Subject:** 2019-11-29 Murkowski Roadless Rule Letter

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Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

Messages to and from this email address may be available to the public under Alaska Public Records Law.

**From:** [Renee Wheat](#)  
**To:** [larry\\_burton@sullivan.senate.gov](mailto:larry_burton@sullivan.senate.gov)  
**Subject:** CBS Assembly Roadless Rule Resolution  
**Date:** Wednesday, December 18, 2019 8:47:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [Roadless Rule Resolution 2019-26A.pdf](#)

---

Good morning,

Attached please find Roadless Rule Resolution 2019-26A passed by the City and Borough of Sitka Assembly on November 26, 2019 for Senator Sullivan's review. Thank you for your assistance. Wishing you a Merry Christmas!

Regards,

Renee D. Wheat  
Administrative Coordinator  
City and Borough of Sitka  
Coast Guard City, USA  
100 Lincoln Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
Phone (907) 747-1808  
Fax (907) 747-7403  
[renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org](mailto:renee.wheat@cityofsitka.org)

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