I strongly oppose rescinding the Roadless Rule.

The Roadless Rule is vital because:

1. Drinking Water and Salmon Habitat: Roadless areas protect the clean drinking water supplies relied upon by millions of Americans. They also safeguard salmon habitat, which is already under severe stress from warming waters, dams, and development. Salmon need cold, clean, connected streams to survive, and building roads in these sensitive areas degrades water quality, increases sedimentation, and disrupts fish passage.

2. Wildlife Habitat Fragmentation: Roadless areas provide some of the last intact, connected habitats for wide-ranging species such as grizzly bears, elk, and lynx. Roads fragment landscapes, introduce invasive species, and make poaching and human disturbance far more likely. Once fragmented, habitat cannot be restored to its original function.

3. Roads and Wildfire Risk: The administration claims that more roads will reduce wildfire risks, but in fact, the opposite is true. Road-building increases human access, ignition sources, and edge effects, which all heighten fire risk. Protecting intact forests is a far more effective way to maintain resilience to wildfire than carving them up with roads.

4. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change: Forest roads and associated logging release carbon stored in soils and trees, worsening climate change. Intact forests in roadless areas serve as some of the best natural carbon storage systems we have. Undermining these protections would accelerate global warming at a time when we must be urgently reducing emissions.

5. Timber Production Argument is Flawed: As Mike Dombeck, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service from 1997 to 2001 and a principal architect of the Roadless Rule, has stated, only about 8 percent of the forest in roadless areas is considered productive timber base. The argument that repealing the rule would meaningfully increase timber supply is not supported by fact or logic. Logging in these areas would create enormous environmental costs for negligible economic return.

For all of these reasons, rescinding the Roadless Rule would be a grave mistake. These protections were established to preserve the nation’s last remaining wild forests for clean water, wildlife, climate stability, and future generations. The science, economics, and public opinion are clear: the Roadless Rule must remain intact.

I have hiked in many trails in the Dark Divide, a large roadless area in SW Washington State. As a resident of Washington, these areas offer recreational opportunities and are pristine habitat for wild species. I urge you to stop the proposal to rescind the Roadless Rule.

I urge you to reject this harmful proposal and uphold the Roadless Rule in its entirety.

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