

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0506**

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

We write to you as the Co-Chairs of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC) Lands, Waters, and Nature Task Force to express our strong opposition to any effort to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule). Additionally, as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Forest Service consider changes to this important policy, we urge you to follow a robust and transparent public comment process that incorporates opinions from the American public. At the very least, this process should mirror the robust process by which the 2001 Roadless Rule was originally developed.

For over two decades, the Roadless Rule has successfully guided the management of 58.5 million acres of public lands across the National Forest System. This policy has successfully balanced the Forest Service's multiple use mandate, preventing new road construction and industrial-scale logging on intact National Forest System lands while still allowing for other land uses such as mining, grazing, and recreation. Moreover, the Roadless Rule includes exceptions that allow the agency to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire in Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). The Forest Service has used this flexibility to prevent wildfire and protect natural lands and Americans' health and property. In fact, an analysis of Forest Service records shows that IRAs accounted for 14 percent of fuel treatment activities on National Forest lands in twelve western states and eight percent of the total areas treated.

As USDA and the Forest Service embark on a formal rulemaking process to potentially rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, we strongly encourage you to prioritize transparency and fully engage public land stakeholders and affected Tribal, local, and state governments.

In developing the 2001 Roadless Rule, the Forest Service exhibited exemplary public outreach and coordination, including hosting approximately 430 public meetings, collaborating with seven other federal agencies, consulting with more than 180 American Indian and Alaska Native groups, and providing an ample public comment period that allowed for 1.6 million public comments, over 95 percent of which voiced strong support for roadless areas. The 2001 rulemaking's level of transparency, outreach, and coordination should serve as a model for this Administration's public notice and comment period.

For a new rulemaking that intends to rescind the 2001 Roadless Rule entirely, a 21-day public comment period is unacceptable and will result in a less robust decision-making process that lacks accountability to the public. USDA and the Forest Service must conduct extensive outreach to affected stakeholders to understand how the public wants their public lands managed.

We request that you offer the same level of public engagement as was provided during the initial development of the 2001 Roadless Rule. Our public lands are central to our national identity, and if given

adequate opportunity for public comment, we are confident that, once again, you will hear that the overwhelming majority of Americans support strong protections for roadless areas.

Sincerely,



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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Maxine Dexter  
Member of Congress

CC: Tom Schultz, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service