

Adam Hackett  
Owner/Operator: F/V Illahee  
228 Lakeview Drive  
Sitka, AK 99835

Tom Tidwell  
Chief of the Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

December 4, 2011

Dear Mr. Tidwell:

I grew up on an island near Sitka, Alaska. A childhood closely intertwined with the ocean fostered within me a great admiration for and draw toward nautical living. As the first commercial fishing generation in my family, my decision to start a fishing business was very conscientious. After receiving a B.S. in Marine Ecology, island roots brought me back to Sitka and the very real life and career of a fisherman. As a young college graduate I have invested in commercial fishing for many reasons. I believe the risk of my investment is lessened because it is backed by the pristine and productive environment I have spent my whole life studying. By investing in salmon fishing, I have invested in the long term future of our most splendid Tongass resource: wild salmon. While also influenced by turbulent international economics, often faltering consumer priorities and my ability to catch a fish; the overriding factor determining the soundness of my investment will be the abundance of local, wild, Tongass salmon.

I wasn't concerned about the hard work or stretches of long days when I'd be away from home. Instead, I thought about fishing 20 or 30 years from now. The last few years have been good for salmon fishermen, but there is no guarantee the industry will remain stable over the decades I plan to be fish. Fortunately, there is a lot that we can do to keep the industry healthy and viable.

I am writing to you today to ask for increased funding for salmon stream restoration projects in the Tongass National Forest. The continued health of Tongass salmon runs is critical to my success as a fisherman, and, in turn, the economy of my community. Restoring streams not only leads to more fish, but can increase fishing opportunities. Additionally, because the productivity of each stream varies from year to year, having more diverse and healthy streams guarantees a more stable fishery over the long-term. When one stream has a down year, there is a greater likelihood that others will take its place if there are more healthy streams in the forest.

**Salmon fishing provides almost \$1 billion in economic activity in Southeast Alaska each year and provides about six times as many jobs in the region as the timber industry. Given these statistics, it doesn't make sense to me that the Forest Service spends about \$25 million annually on timber and road building, compared to \$1.5 million on fisheries, watersheds and salmon-habitat restoration.**

In recent years, the timber industry has struggled, while salmon fishing has had record years for volume, prices and returns. Recent Alaska Department of Fish and Game statistics show Southeast has become the state's most productive region, even more so than Bristol Bay.

I ask that the Forest Service look at the statistics and economic facts when it allocates funding for the Tongass. And, I ask that you consider the young salmon fishermen like myself who have made a big investment and are counting on the long-term health of the fishery.

I've heard that over \$100 million in watershed restoration work is still needed on the Tongass. This seems like a lot, and it would take decades for these programs to be funded at the current pace, yet this is only the equivalent of four years of Tongass timber program funding at the current level. Seeing the positive impact of minimal prior restoration work, I can't imagine what \$100 million in projects would mean to the fishery. I think it would mean a lot more economically to the region than putting \$100 million toward timber. I hope you would agree.

Thank you for your consideration and for the salmon restoration work that has been done on the Tongass to this point.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam Hackett". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Adam Hackett