

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 12, 2009

"We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune."

-- President Theodore Roosevelt

President-Elect Barack Obama
Obama-Biden Transition Project
Washington, D.C., 20270

Dear President-Elect Obama:

More than 100 hundred years ago, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the importance of conserving America's natural legacy and, in 1908, established our National Forest System, to ensure America's natural heritage would be carried on for future generations. These public lands are a cornerstone of our outdoor legacy, providing valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, clean drinking water for millions, and an abundance of world-class outdoor recreation opportunities Americans have come to enjoy.

A century later, these national forests still stand tall because Americans have continued to enthusiastically embrace their protection and have pushed back when corporate special interests threatened them. Since its promulgation, the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule has served as a balanced conservation policy that has successfully managed these public lands in accordance with the will of the American people and consistent with sound science.

This landmark conservation policy was the result of one of the most thorough public participation processes in our nation's history, with more than two decades of debate and nearly 1.6 million public comments in favor of strong protections for these last wild places. The rule establishes a balance between environmental, social and economic concerns and thus serves to tie together the nation's patchwork of local forest management practices and protects the remaining 58.5 million acres of our nation's unspoiled places. It accommodates necessary fuels reduction, recreation, and emergency access while prohibiting the kind of new development in the backcountry — like road construction, industrial logging, mining, and oil-and-gas drilling — that would destroy the special qualities of these wild places that Americans value.

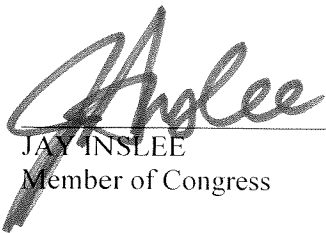
Now, we call on you to renew Theodore Roosevelt's commitment to our natural heritage, and fulfill your pledge to protect more than 58 million acres of pristine national forests by resolving to:

- Uphold, enforce and defend the Roadless Area Conservation Rule that protects 58.5 million acres, or roughly one-third, of our last undeveloped national forests.
- Suspend pending plans that allow commercial road-building and logging in inventoried roadless areas that violates the rule.
- Preserve Alaska's Tongass National Rainforest by ensuring its protection under the rule.

The conservation of our national forests is an issue of great importance for all Americans and has great ramifications for the nation's economy, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities and quality of life. Moreover, their importance as a source of water for 60 million Americans and as vital refuge for wildlife will only increase in a warming world. America's national forest roadless areas are a unique natural treasure and their future is in your hands. Keep the Roadless Area Conservation Rule the law of the land; because once these forests are gone, they're gone forever.

Cc: John Podesta, Valerie Jarrett, Pete Rouse, Co-Chairs, Obama-Biden Transition Project.

Sincerely,



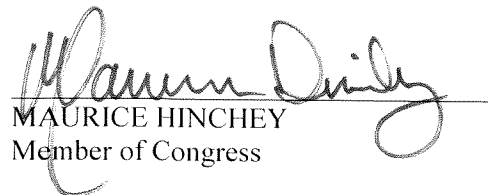
JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress



MARK KIRK
Member of Congress



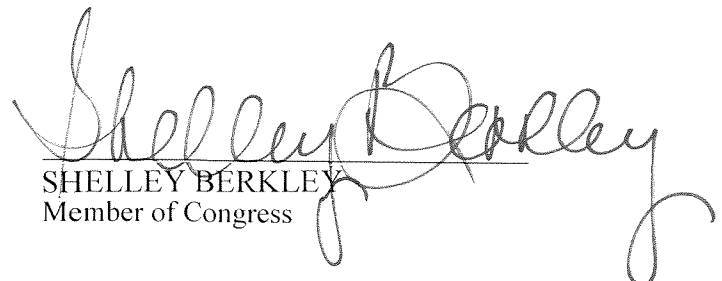
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MAURICE HINCHEY
Member of Congress



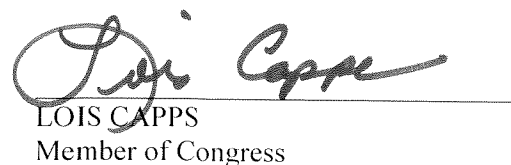
HOWARD BERMAN
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SHELLEY BERKLEY
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EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



RUSS CARNAHAN
Member of Congress



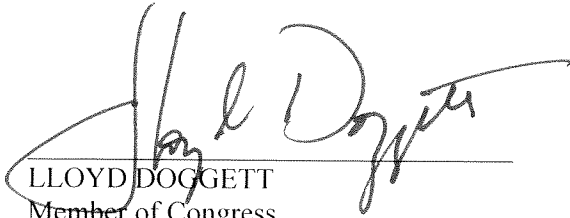
KATHY CASTOR
Member of Congress



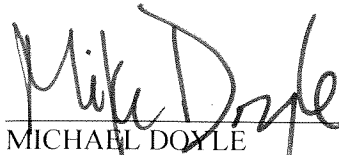
PETER DEFAZIO
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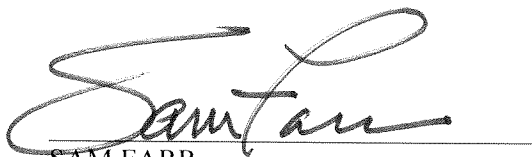
DIANA DEGETTE
Member of Congress



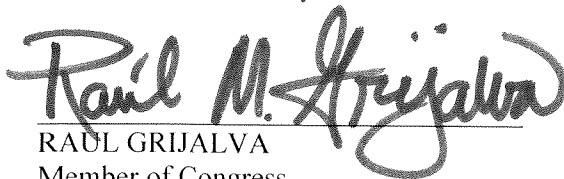
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SAM FARR
Member of Congress



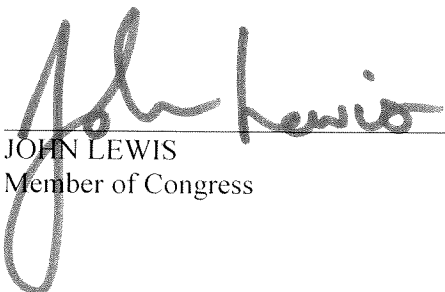
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MICHAEL HONDA
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BARBARA LEE
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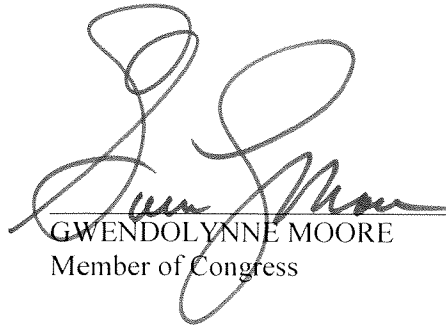
JOHN LEWIS
Member of Congress



CAROLYN MALONEY
Member of Congress



BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress



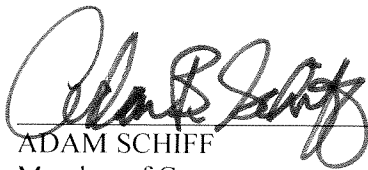
GWENDOLYNNE MOORE
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JAMES MORAN
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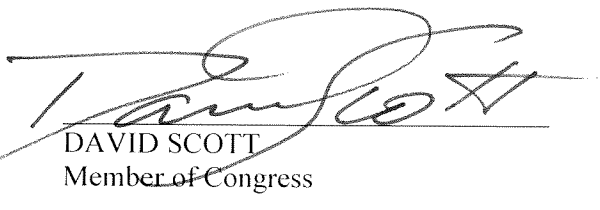
GRACE NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress



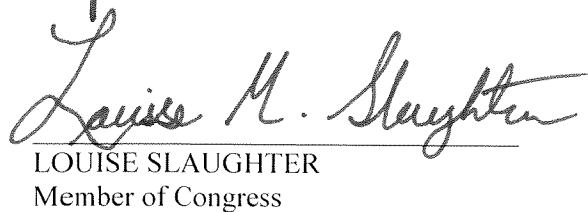
ADAM SCHIFF
Member of Congress



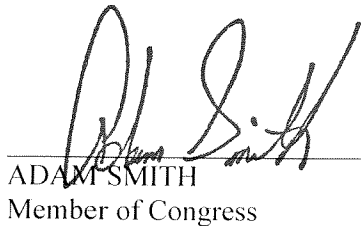
ALLYSON SCHWARTZ
Member of Congress



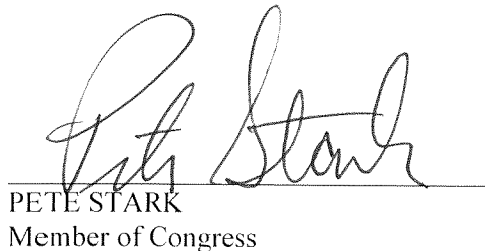
DAVID SCOTT
Member of Congress



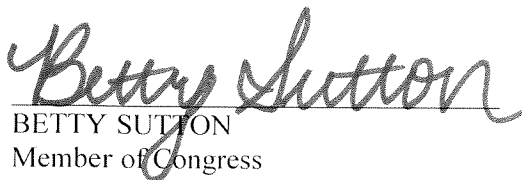
LOUISE SLAUGHTER
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ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress



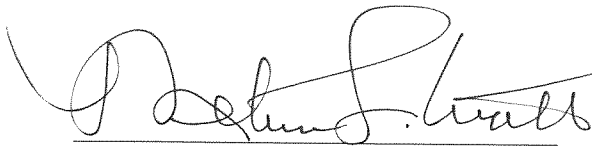
PETE STARK
Member of Congress



BETTY SUTTON
Member of Congress



ELLEN TAUSCHER
Member of Congress



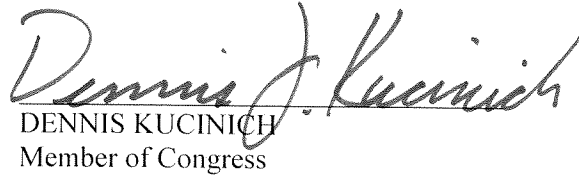
MELVIN WATT
Member of Congress



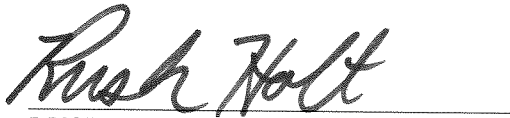
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Member of Congress



JOHN YARMUTH
Member of Congress



DENNIS KUCINICH
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RUSH HOLT
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