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United States
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Washington
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201 14th & Independence, SW
Post Office Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 1500/1510

Date:

DEC 20 1999

The Honorable Harold Rogers
United States House of Representatives
2470 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-1705

FILE

Dear Congressman Rogers:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

The Forest Service is firmly committed to following the President's directive to develop a proposal that conserves roadless areas and their important values. We are developing such a proposal through a public and open process that will culminate in an agency rulemaking accompanied by an environmental impact statement. The initial opportunity for public involvement began on October 19, 1999, with the publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement. Release of the Notice of Intent initiated a 60-day public scoping period, which will end on December 20, 1999.

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The issue of roadless area management is not new to the Forest Service. We have more than three decades of experience with public comment concerning roadless area management. We will build on the public comment received in the past, most recently in the form of more than 80,000 letters commenting on the recently promulgated interim suspension of road construction in roadless areas.



Although not required by law, we are holding scoping meetings at the national, regional, and local levels. National scoping meetings were held through mid-December. As a demonstration of our commitment to public involvement, we are also holding local public meetings on every national forest that contains inventoried roadless areas, although certain forests may decide to combine meetings. Certain forests are even holding multiple scoping meetings.

I have enclosed a list of the regional and forest meetings that we are holding. The comprehensive and extensive public effort will allow interested people, including those who live near a national forest and those who do not, a chance to help shape the debate, the alternatives, and the analysis that we conduct. We encourage all people, including those who do not attend the meetings, to submit written comments to the Forest Service at the following address:

USDA Forest Service - CAET
Attention: Roadless Area Project
Post Office Box 221090
Salt Lake City, Utah 84122

The upcoming draft environmental impact statement will outline specific alternatives and provide a detailed basis for discussion with the public about how roadless areas should be managed in the future. The Forest Service will provide another period for public comment and will host another series of meetings and public involvement opportunities upon release of the draft regulation and draft environmental impact statement next year. Documents will be accompanied by information and data that Congress and the American people need to understand the potential effects of the agency's draft proposal. Because this issue is of such interest to Congress, we will ensure that you and your staffs are provided an opportunity to receive regularly scheduled briefings as we move through the rulemaking process.

Thank you for this opportunity to address your concerns about the scoping process. I am sending an identical response to each of your colleagues who joined you in writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dombeck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

MIKE DOMBECK
Chief

Enclosure: Schedule of National Forest Hosted Public Meetings by Region



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201 14th & Independence, SW
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FILE

The Honorable Bob Schaffer
United States House of Representatives
212 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-0604

Dear Congressman Schaffer:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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DEC 20 1999

FILE

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
United States House of Representatives
1440 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-1202

Dear Congressman Simpson:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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DEC 20 1999

The Honorable Joe Skeen
United States House of Representatives
2302 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-3102

FILE

Dear Congressman Skeen:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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FILE

The Honorable Bob Stump
United States House of Representatives
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-0303

Dear Congressman Stump:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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Date: DEC 20 1999

FILE

The Honorable Bart Stupak
United States House of Representatives
2348 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-2201

Dear Congressman Stupak:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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Date: DEC 20 1999

FILE

The Honorable John E. Sununu
United States House of Representatives
316 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-2901

Dear Congressman Sununu:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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Date: DEC 20 1999

The Honorable Thomas G. Tancredo
United States House of Representatives
1123 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-0606

FILE

Dear Congressman Tancredo:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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Date:

FILE

The Honorable Charles H. Taylor
United States House of Representatives
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-3311

Dear Congressman Taylor:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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Date: DEC 20 1999

FILE

The Honorable John R. Thune
United States House of Representatives
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-4101

Dear Congressman Thune:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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Date: DEC 20 1999

FILE

The Honorable Jim Turner
United States House of Representatives
208 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-4302

Dear Congressman Turner:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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DEC 20 1999

FILE

The Honorable Greg Walden
United States House of Representatives
1404 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-3702

Dear Congressman Walden:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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FILE

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
United States House of Representatives
236 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-1701

Dear Congressman Whitfield:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

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The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20515-0201

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for your letter of November 17, 1999, jointly signed by several of your colleagues, requesting a 120-day extension to the roadless areas rulemaking process. I share your belief that sufficient opportunity to comment on this important effort is essential to its success, but I do not believe that a 120-day extension of the specified public scoping period is necessary or useful. I would like to describe for you the efforts we are making to ensure that the American people have ample opportunity to offer their opinions.

The Forest Service is firmly committed to following the President's directive to develop a proposal that conserves roadless areas and their important values. We are developing such a proposal through a public and open process that will culminate in an agency rulemaking accompanied by an environmental impact statement. The initial opportunity for public involvement began on October 19, 1999, with the publication in the *Federal Register* of the Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement. Release of the Notice of Intent initiated a 60-day public scoping period, which will end on December 20, 1999.

We are only in the scoping phase of the National Environmental Policy Act. As you know, the scoping process is intended to engage all interested people in determining the scope of the proposed action, alternatives, and effects before the agency publishes a draft environmental impact statement and proposed rule. Through scoping, we are inviting the participation of all affected state, local, and tribal governments and all interested members of the public to identify the significant issues that should be analyzed in-depth in the environmental impact statement, and to identify those issues that should be eliminated from detailed study. Suggestions for alternative ways of addressing long-term protection for roadless areas are also being solicited during this period.

The issue of roadless area management is not new to the Forest Service. We have more than three decades of experience with public comment concerning roadless area management. We will build on the public comment received in the past, most recently in the form of more than 80,000 letters commenting on the recently promulgated interim suspension of road construction in roadless areas.

