

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Legislation is Critically Needed to Protect Threatened Roadless Areas in Alaska and Utah

Conservation groups voice strong support for Roadless Area Conservation Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- In response to today's introduction of the Roadless Area Conservation Act by Sen. Cantwell and Rep. Gallego, the following statement was released by **Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, Geos Institute, Earthjustice, Sierra Club, Wildlands Network, Alaska Wilderness League, The Wilderness Society, Defenders of Wildlife, the Grand Canyon Trust, the Center for Biological Diversity, Western Resource Advocates and the Natural Resources Defense Council.**

"The Roadless Rule is one of our nation's premier conservation accomplishments, protecting almost 60 million acres of treasured national forestlands and intact watersheds. In the face of efforts to weaken these safeguards, the Roadless Area Conservation Act is more important than ever for keeping our irreplaceable landscapes intact nationwide and especially where these landmark protections are threatened by the Trump Administration in Alaska and Utah.

"This legislation preserves roadless areas for hunting and fishing, activities that support a subsistence lifestyle and define a way of life for many people living in rural forested areas. It will help reduce climate change impacts, protect imperiled species that rely upon Roadless areas for survival, and preserve special places that Native American and Alaska Native communities consider sacred. It supports outdoor recreation and tourism industries that thrive when forests are valued for their many ecological benefits and sets aside cherished places that millions of Americans visit for outdoor recreation and wildlife viewing.

"In introducing this legislation, Sen. Cantwell and Rep. Gallego are not only working to keep these lands intact for future generations but continuing to respect the more than 1.5 million people who voiced support for strong Roadless area protections during the original Roadless rulemaking process.

"This legislation exemplifies true federal leadership. Secretary Perdue of the U.S. Department of Agriculture should follow this lead by selecting the no-action alternative for the Alaska-specific Roadless Rule now under consideration by USDA and reject Utah's petition for a state-specific Roadless Rule."

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