**Please oppose Roadless Rule and Tongass National Forest amendments that attack a landmark conservation measure and America’s largest national forest**

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of our organizations and millions of supporters across the country, we ask that you strenuously oppose two particularly egregious, poison pill Rep. Young amendments, affecting Alaska’s national forests, to H.R. 2 (Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2019). We also strongly urge you to oppose the federal forest provisions in the Farm Bill and any other amendments that further undermine environmental safeguards on our federal forests.

If adopted, Rep. Young’s amendments would undo long-standing protections for extraordinary public resources, which were adopted with input from diverse stakeholders from Alaska and across the country, and open the doors to even broader attacks on public lands.

Amendment 69 would irretrievably compromise one of our country’s landmark conservation accomplishments—the Roadless Area Conservation Rule—by exempting the national forests in Alaska from its protection, including the largest remaining intact temperate rainforest in the world, the Tongass National Forest. The Roadless Rule is enormously popular nationwide, having won support from millions of Americans when originally adopted nearly 17 years ago and consistently maintaining it since then when threatened with rollback. It has helped control the Forest Service’s multibillion dollar road maintenance backlog, reduced conflict over loss of intact public wildlands, protected water supply for 60 million people, and preserved wildlife habitat and other vanishing natural values on public lands.

Alaska’s national forests were included in the Roadless Rule—with overwhelming support from commenters—expressly because forest wildlands persist in Alaska on a scale unknown elsewhere in the country. In addition to harboring great natural beauty and iconic wildlife, federal scientists found that retaining the intact roadless areas of the Tongass is a “key element” in sustaining the region’s extraordinary salmon runs (and their commercial, subsistence, and recreational fisheries). The Rule, however, balances these protections by allowing public roads, hydropower projects, utility connectors, and access to inholdings (including mines), so its application in Alaska does not adversely affect community access or economic development projects in the legitimate public interest.

Amendment XXX also would nullify a Forest Service plan for eventually moving the Tongass away from taxpayer-subsidized, industrial-scale old-growth logging, long since abandoned elsewhere in the national forest system. The Forest Service based the transition plan on the unanimous recommendations of an advisory committee representing the timber industry, the State, and many other interests. The plan also incorporated protections for ecologically high value areas, safeguarding fish and wildlife habitat essential to customary and traditional uses by Alaska Natives and others and depended on by the world-class recreation, tourism, and fishing industries that drive the region’s economy (the timber industry, by contrast, contributed less than one percent in total employment related earnings in Southeast Alaska in 2016). The plan to transition away from old-growth logging also supports the international commitment to fighting climate change by saving carbon-storing ancient forests. In short, the plan establishes an important path away from the controversy and destruction of old-growth logging.

Again, please vote against these amendments and the harm they would cause to irreplaceable federal forest resources in Alaska, including the destruction of ancient trees, world-class salmon runs, and vital old-growth habitat for rare bird and wildlife populations.

Signed,