

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Theodore R. Kulongoski



Governor

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Kulongoski seeks public input on forest protection

30-day comment period on the Governor's roadless petition announced

Salem, OR— Governor Ted Kulongoski today announced field hearings for public input in shaping his petition to protect nearly 2 million acres of Oregon's roadless forests.

"I want to hear from Oregonians about the value of our roadless areas," the Governor said.

"Oregonians should be the ones determining the future of our forest lands. These two million acres are part of every Oregonian's natural heritage."

On April 21, Governor Ted Kulongoski announced his plan to submit a petition to the U.S. Forest Service regarding management of roadless areas in Oregon's national forests. The Governor will submit his petition this fall in accordance with a rule the federal government adopted in 2005, which grants 18 months to state governors to urge either protection of the forest lands or opening them for development. The controversial rule, which Governor Kulongoski strongly opposed, replaced the 2001 Roadless Area Protection Rule and opened the possibility that the federal government would lift protection of roadless areas in Oregon and elsewhere.

The Governor has sued the Bush administration to block its rollback of the Clinton-era roadless protections. The case pending is *States of California, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington v. United States Department of Agriculture, et al.*, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, Case No. C 05-03508 JSW. The suit alleges that the federal government violated the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) by failing to provide an adequate public process for the rules change and that the Bush administration action was arbitrary and capricious under the Administrative Procedures Act (APA).

The Governor's staff, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife are working together to develop the petition and the public comment process. The petition process will include evaluating the analyses and inventories of roadless areas used to adopt the 2001 rule.

Three public meetings will be held across the state in August, where Oregonians will be able to review maps and characteristics of the forested areas under consideration and submit comment cards on the proposal. In addition, a link on the Governor's web site, www.governor.oregon.gov, will lead to the comment form.

Comments on the proposal will be taken between **Thursday, August 10** and **Friday, September 8**.

In addition to the public comment period on the petition, the Governor's office will assess the public input received for the 2001 roadless rule. Of 79,000 comments submitted by Oregonians regarding the 2001 rule, 92% supported the complete protection of all roadless areas.

On March 9, 2006, Governor Kulongoski asked the US Forest Service to halt plans for logging in two timber sales in the Biscuit Fire Complex on the Siskiyou National Forest in southern Oregon—both roadless areas—while the petition process afforded under the 2005 rule is carried out.

Roadless Area Public Forums

August 10

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Blue Mountain Conference Center

404 Twelfth Street

La Grande, OR 97850

August 14

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Portland State University

University Place – Columbia Falls Ballroom

310 SW Lincoln Street

Portland, OR 97201

August 16

6:00 - 8:00 pm

Medford City Hall

411 W 8th Street

Medford, OR 97501