



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

April 21, 2026

Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

I write to express my concerns with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s proposed rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule, which would impact significant portions of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Northern Wisconsin. As governor, I have worked hard to protect and conserve our unique natural resources in the state, and this proposed rescission is counter to the state, local, and Tribal-led efforts that have been and continue to be advanced in Wisconsin.

The 2001 Roadless Rule protects nearly 70,000 acres of backcountry lands in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest from unnecessary road construction and timber harvesting activities while providing some of the country's premier hunting, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor opportunities. Reducing unneeded development activities on public lands also helps protect water quality, another top priority of my administration. Numerous former federal government experts residing in Wisconsin who managed both the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service, as well as environmental and public lands advocates have expressed concern about the potential harmful impacts of this proposal. The 2001 Roadless Rule was developed and approved with broad support, and it is concerning that USDA is seeking to rescind these protections with no clear justification besides capitulating to the misguided goals of President Donald J. Trump.

Additionally, it is clear that USDA has not meaningfully engaged with Tribal Nations in this rescission proposal. Numerous Tribal Nations and Tribal organizations, including the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission have expressed significant opposition to this proposal and have demanded a real seat at the table in federal decision-making that impacts ceded territories and Tribal reservation lands, yet it seems USDA and the Trump Administration has disregarded their responsibility of government-to-government collaboration with Tribal Nations. One of my first actions as governor was to re-establish a formal Tribal consultation policy between my administration and the 11 federally recognized Tribal Nations located in Wisconsin, which has benefited the state and resulted in better collaboration, improved decision-making, and greater respect for Tribal treaty rights. USDA must follow my lead by reversing course and engaging Tribal Nations in relevant decision-making, including this proposal.

Wisconsin's forest industry is an important sector that I have been proud to support here in Wisconsin. At the same time, protecting vulnerable and valuable public lands must also be a priority. As such, I urge USDA to abandon this unnecessary rescission, improve Tribal consultation policies, and re-focus its efforts on providing real support to American farmers and foresters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Evers". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and connected.

Tony Evers
Governor