



Elizabeth A. McKinnon

302 N 360 W, Ogden, UT 84404

23 August, 2022

Secretary Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

August 30, 2022

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I am writing with the utmost urgency to plead for immediately STOPPING the decimation of all mature and old growth forests. I ask that you permanently clarify and strengthen the intended goals of President Biden's Earth Day Executive Order 14072. These carbon dense trees are WORTH MORE STANDING. Many of the "priorities" listed on your website will be negatively impacted by each tree that is cut:

- **TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS:** Trees are the lungs of our planet. Mature forests and their soils are sequestering massive amounts of carbon NOW and offer one of the best protections against global warming. This is natural, proven and unencumbered carbon capture without the trade-off of continued petroleum production that oil companies are enthusiastically promoting.
- Rich mycorrhizal communities have indispensable roles in the sequestering of carbon. They thrive in the shaded, moist ecosystems provided by a mature forest and are severely endangered by the removal of the upper story. Leaving a few trees per acre will not provide the environment needed for the health of these communities.
- **THE DROUGHT CRISIS:** Mature forests are critical resources for supplying clean and fresh water to our communities. These trees and their under-story hold huge amounts of water and top soil. As they are logged, this biomass dries out and reduces local capacity to retain water which can aggravate flooding, slides, top soil removal and leaching of nutrients from the soil.

- WILDLAND FIRE PREPAREDNESS is not going to be advanced by cutting down live older forests that are more resistant to fire than younger trees. However, there is a huge percentage of standing dead trees that are tinder for fires and should be thinned out.
- AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL: The sheer majesty of mature forests should be protected for future generations to experience. The stark and irrefutable difference between the diversity and richness of a mature forest vs a single variety of forest tree planted to replace clear cutting by mankind is stunning.

The Forest Service claims that a majority of our mature and old-growth forests on Federal Lands are already in a protected status, but this could not be farther from the truth. The Climate Forests Campaign has identified 240,000 acres at risk right now of being logged. Please review and stop this travesty.

Thank you,
Elizabeth McKinnon