

Concerning Responses to Request to Extend the Comment Period.

The TGIRP is an extremely complex plan involving many details that span a wide spectrum of complicated issues. Moreover, to this already enormous amount of material, a further major tranche of information was added on March 27, 2024 with only 12 days left in the comment period. These facts compelled me to request an extension of the comment period on three different occasions (see Comments 121, 154, and 525), all of which were overruled.

In the written response to these comments, the USFS stated that “The Responsible Official determined the 30-day comment period was an adequate amount of time to read, digest and provide meaningful comment.” Similarly, the written response also states that the “additional information provided ... did not constitute a major release of new information or a change to the proposal that would necessitate an additional comment period.” In other words, the “Responsible Official” simply chose to exercise *ex cathedra* authority to reject the request of this Responsible Commenter. The Responsible Official has spoken: case closed.

I continue to believe that an extension was entirely reasonable, clearly justified, and within the authority of the Responsible Official to provide, if for no other reason than to demonstrate that the USFS welcomes public comment and is willing to go the extra mile to make sure there is sufficient opportunity “to read, digest and provide meaningful comment.” Unfortunately, there is now additional evidence that would seem to suggest that the USFS not only doesn’t welcome public input but actively discourages it. It is difficult to avoid this conclusion given that the current 45-day objection period is centered around the holidays when most people have family commitments that often involve travel.

Consequently, I hereby register my official objection, and once again respectfully request a reasonable extension to ensure full public participation in the current objection period.

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