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Organization:

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Comments: Please see attachment. Thank you!

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland, Thank you for advancing President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies. Protecting the remaining mature and old-growth forests and trees on federal lands is vitally important. These trees and forests should be protected for their own sake, for the incredibly important habitat they provide for the many, many species that depend on them, and for the vital role they play in sequestering carbon and reducing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Through their impact on carbon old growth forests play a critically important role in reducing climate change and its disastrous impacts on the world's ecosystems. We citizens of this country, and the world, along with countless other species, are depending on you to fulfill the President's directive to provide lasting protections for these trees. I strongly feel that all trees that are 80 years old or older should be defined as "mature" trees and should be protected from logging. Using that definition of "mature" would protect our most climate and carbon-critical forests, and logging of these big old trees should never be allowed. President Biden's Earth Day Executive Order rightly acknowledged the critical role mature and old-growth forests play as a climate solution, and the urgent need to confront the threats forests face. If continued logging of these trees is allowed, the vital roles that they play in sequestering carbon and providing habitat to species that depend on old growth forests will be lost - and the land managers who allow that logging to happen will be responsible for that loss. The threat logging poses to mature and old-growth federal forests is entirely within federal land management agencies' power to address. The Biden administration must do all it can to protect mature and old growth forests to limit atmospheric carbon levels and demonstrate international leadership through binding regulations that will continue in future administrations. I personally enjoy hiking in and exploring the old growth forests in the mountains near my home in Roosevelt, Utah. I have experienced the different feeling, and greater biodiversity, found in old-growth forests compared to those that have been logged. Please protect these old forests for my sake and the sake of all of the other people who enjoy them and will enjoy them in future generations. Please, US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Interior, work together to initiate rulemaking as soon as possible, based on a definition of mature forests as trees of 80 years old or older, to permanently end the avoidable loss - through logging - of the critically important roles these trees and forests play for carbon, water, wildlife and people! Sincerely, Chad Hamblin Roosevelt, Utah

IMAGE: Me by an old growth Rocky Mountain juniper (photo)