

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/16/2024 4:00:00 AM

First name: Matthew

Last name: Hall

Organization: Pulp and Paperworkers&#39; Resource Council

Title:

Comments: Attachment: PPRC Comment Letter to US Forest Service on Old Growth Forest.docx.pdf

September 16, 2024

U.S. Forest Service,

We write to you on behalf of the Pulp and Paperworkers' Resource Council (PPRC). We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356.

The PPRC is a non-profit grassroots organization made up of ground floor hourly union and non-union workers in the forest products industries. We come from across the United States. The PPRC is committed to educating our policy makers and legislators on issues of importance to the forest products industry and the impact policies have on our jobs and the economies of the cities and small rural communities where our industries are located.

The PPRC believes that proper forest management is key for having a healthy National Forest system in our country. The primary threat to old growth forests is not logging. The primary threat is severe wildfires, insect infestations, and disease. Under the current process, it already takes years for the Forest Service to implement forest health treatments, which are important to reducing the risk of wildfires. The proposed amendment will add more active layers of bureaucracy and red tape instead of prioritizing active forest management to mitigate these natural threats.

Our mills rely on feedstocks from our forests to keep running but most often rely on private timber sales rather than timber from our National Forest because of the red tape and litigation to get forest management projects approved. The forest products industry uses these feedstocks to generate carbon neutral bioenergy and manufacture products that are renewable, biodegradable and compostable that are critical to our nation's economy.

We must empower our public land managers to do their jobs and take care of forests. We need policies to accelerate forest thinning and other management activities to save our public land from these severe wildfires. Only 2% of working forest on public land is harvested per year. This must increase if we are to save our forests.

Sincerely,

Matthew Hall

PPRC National Chairman