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Comments: Please see attached the 21,241 signatures on this petition regarding the Land Management Plan Direction for Old-Growth Forest Conditions Across the National Forest System #65356.

The U.S. Forest Service must significantly strengthen its final record of decision on the national old-growth amendment to (1) ensure meaningful protections for the United States' remaining old-growth forests and (2) lay a foundation that will increase the abundance and distribution of old-growth trees for future generations.

National old-growth policy fails to protect the country's oldest trees and forestsSeptember 20, 2024Dear U.S. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore,We, the 21,241 undersigned, urge the U.S. Forest Service to significantly strengthen its final record of decision on the national old-growth amendment to (1) ensure meaningful protections for the United States' remaining old-growth forests and (2) lay a foundation that will increase the abundance and distribution of old-growth trees for future generations.The agency's proposed policy includes numerous loopholes that allow for continued [mdash] or even increased [mdash] logging of old-growth trees. Logging old-growth trees to save them from potential threats is a false solution. These climate champions are worth more standing.To successfully protect old-growth forests and trees, the final national old-growth amendment must support a modified alternative 3 that does the following:- Eliminate exceptions and end \*all\* logging of old-growth trees in national forests.- Remove the economic incentive for logging old growth by prohibiting the sale, exchange, and milling of old-growth trees. This should prevent all but truly rare removals of such trees.- Set the stage for durable protections for mature trees and stands, which is paramount to expanding the abundance of future old growth. To recover old growth that was lost to past mismanagement, mature forests and trees must be protected from commercial logging.Given the outstanding role mature and old-growth trees and forests play in curbing the climate and extinction crises, the Forest Service must establish \*meaningful\* safeguards for their conservation. Failure to do so undermines the objectives of this amendment, contravenes the direction of President Biden's Executive Order 14072, and ignores more than half a million public comments the U.S. Forest Service received following the advance notice of proposed rulemaking it published in April 2023.We[rsquo]re counting on you to listen to the public and end the commercial exploitation of the country's oldest forests and trees. They should be left standing to store climate-heating carbon, improve watershed health, provide crucial wildlife habitat, increase forest resilience to wildfires, and act as a bulwark against climate-change impacts like flooding and drought.ATTACHMENT: CenterforBiologicalDiversity-NationalOldGrowthPolicy-21241Signatures.pdf - includes copies of the letter text above and 21,241 names/signors as well as contact information.