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First name: Harriet

Last name: Hageman

Organization: U.S. House of Representatives

Title: Member of Congress

Comments: Chief Randy Moore

U.S. Forest Service

1400 Independence Avenue SW Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Chief Moore,

September 19, 2024

On December 20, 2023, the U.S. Forest Service (Service) released a Notice of Intent (NOI) for its plan to implement a "National Forest Plan Amendment to Conserve and Steward Old Growth Forests." Following the NOL the Service rolled out its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which evaluates the impact of amending 128 land management plans across various Western states. I am deeply concerned with the process by which this Draft EIS was rolled out and the economic and environmental impacts of analyzing 128 separate plans under the umbrella of one EIS. I ask that the Service withdraw its proposal concerning old growth immediately.

This proposal will impact eight national forests in Wyoming: Ashley, Bighorn, Black Hills, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Medicine Bow-Routt, Shoshone, and Uinta National Forests. This is a tyrannical top-down prescription that has neglected to involve the appropriate stakeholders as cooperating agencies early in the process. State and local agencies which requested cooperating agency status initially received minimal information from the Service. It was only after Senator John Barrasso pressed the Service in a May 2024 hearing that this status was granted.

It is imperative that the Service more actively solicit the participation of state, tribal, and local governments as cooperating agencies in implementing the EIS process under NEPA. I remind the Service that the 2012 Planning Rule affirms that it must "engage the public-including tribes and Alaska Native Corporations, other Federal Agencies, state and local governments, individuals, and public and private organizations or entities--early and throughout the planning process."

The Service also ought to be reminded that Wyoming already has existing land management plans in place, and that a few of Wyoming's eight national forests have already begun revising their plans. Laying this heavy rule on

top of these efforts puts an unfair burden on cooperators, stakeholders of all kinds, and land-users in general. Going forward, I urge that the Service more fully comply with NEPA by providing details to all state and local agencies seeking cooperator status in a timelier manner, as required by law.

Again, I ask that the service scrap this approach of managing hundreds of land management plans through a single EIS, and ultimately withdraw its proposal.

Sincerely.

ATTACHMENT: HagemanH_Incoming_8974893.pdf - this is the same content that is coded in text box; it was originally only included as an attachment and includes transmittal information