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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Reid: I am writing as a private citizen and resident of Arnold, CA to comment on the EIS for the MAC project. I have been a resident of Arnold for more than 30 years, first as a weekender in a small Lilac Park cabin, and since 2014 as a full-time resident in Meadowmont. During that time there have been so many catastrophic wildfires in similar communities, BUT NOT HERE! Although I could chalk that up to luck, I know that the work done by the USFS, Cal Fire, Ebbetts Pass Fire, and other agencies and organizations that have been planning and implementing forestry projects in the area have contributed greatly to our safety. We have dodged so many bullets, and I believe that if it were not for the work you do, Arnold might share the same plight as places like Paradise and Napa. My first year in Arnold as a full-time resident was when the Butte Fire roared through Calaveras County. I did not have to evacuate, but I could hear the bulldozers creating a fire break less than a mile from my house. I am very cognizant of the threat of fire to my community. Thank you for all the work you do. I have read the EIS for the MAC project and I fully support it. However, I feel that there are a few things that should appear in the document but do not:

- If practical, I'd like to see a preference for our local forestry contractors to be included, either by awarding extra points to locals during the RFP process or by strongly recommending local labor in the project requirements. This would address the goal of environmental climate justice for disadvantaged communities that is included in nearly all government-funded grants. There are numerous family businesses in the area that can do the mastication and clearing for the project, but in recent years some of the local projects have been granted to out-of-state companies that have offered lower prices. I've worked on a few grants in the area (one CAL FIRE and one SNC grant, both along Highway 4) and although the prices offered by these out-of-state or out-of-county organizations have been attractive, the work they produced was not nearly as good as that performed by our locals. I strongly believe that our local companies bring an added dimension of pride to their work, delivering a superior product. Please incentivize the project to HIRE LOCAL.
- I would like to see references to California's climate goals incorporated into the project. I did not see any references to climate goals when I read through the documents, but I believe that this should be included in the "Purpose and Need" section of the EIS.
- I would also like you to include a strong preference and/or incentive to remove excess biomass to a biomass (or wood products) plant as an alternative to pile burning. The smoke from pile burning is very noticeable in our neighborhoods when it takes place and poses health risks to the folks that moved up here to be healthier! I even wish that burning pine needles would be abolished, but that's outside of the scope of your project.
- I would like to see the plan include beneficial forestry practices that have been identified in multiple USDA research projects, especially the use of biochar that has been created from the biomass removed as part of the MAC project's treatment plans. Returning biomass to the forests in the form of biochar is not only beneficial to the forest, but it supports local economies and jobs (and illustrates the benefits of your own research!).

Again, I thank you for all the work you do to maintain and protect our national forests, and I commend USFS and UMWRA for spearheading this effort. Jill Mischeau