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First name: Caitlin

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Organization: US EPA Region 10

Title:

Comments: Please see attachment. Also copied and pasted here:

March 17, 2025

Delaney Caslow

U.S. Forest Service

1220 Southwest 3rd Avenue, Suite G015

Portland, Oregon 97204

Dear Delaney Caslow:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed U.S. Forest Service's November 2024 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) Amendment (CEQ Number 20240208, EPA Project Number 23-0053-USFS). The EPA has conducted its review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and our review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The CAA Section 309 role is unique to the EPA and requires the EPA to review and comment publicly on any proposed federal action subject to NEPA's environmental impact statement requirement.

The DEIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with amending the NWFP to establish new or modify existing plans for 17 national forests in Washington, Oregon, and California. The purpose of the amendment is to better enable the Forest Service to meet the original intent of the NWFP to conserve mature and old-growth ecosystems, protect the northern spotted owl and other species, preserve riparian areas and waters, and provide a sustainable supply of forest products. The DEIS identifies and evaluates a No Action Alternative (A) and three action alternatives (B, C, and D). Alternative B is the Proposed Action and reflects recommendations from the project's Federal Advisory Committee, a multi-entity collaborative that includes representatives from states, Tribes, conservation groups, timber groups, and community groups.

The EPA supports the Forest Service's efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the NWFP given changed ecological and social conditions. We agree that increased stewardship is needed for fuels management and forest ecological health, and we support increased stewardship occurring concurrently with aquatic restoration needs identified in the NWFP Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS). We appreciate the Forest Service involving

the EPA as a cooperating agency. The EPA did not identify significant public health, welfare, or environmental quality concerns. We will continue to provide relevant information via our cooperating agency role to improve the NEPA analysis and the environmental outcome of the proposed action.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the DEIS for this project. If you have questions about this review, please contact Caitlin Roesler of my staff at 206-553-6518 or roesler.caitlin@epa.gov, or me, at 206-553-1774 or at chu.rebecca@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Chu, Manager

NEPA Branch

ATTACHMENT-LETTER TEXT: 23-0053-USFS_DEIS_NWFPAmdement.pdf; This is the same content that is coded in text box; it was also included as an attachment