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Glenn Casamassa, Regional Forester

United States Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region

1220 SW 3rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97204

SUBJECT: Eastside Screen Revision Process

Dear Mr. Casamassa,

I am writing to oppose the Trump administration and US Forest Service decision to revise the environmental rules known as the Eastside Screens. For 25 years, these rules have protected old-growth forests, large trees and structure, and wildlife in Eastern Oregon and Washington while facilitating multiple parties (logging interests, USFS, conservationists, Tribes, local elected officials, etc.) to find common ground based on a clear understanding of what is and is not allowed on our public lands. The Screens also play an important role in carbon sequestration, protecting soils, and water quality. If the Eastside Screens are to be revised, it should happen through a balanced, transparent, comprehensive, and scientifically based mechanism that prioritizes wildlife protection, climate resilience, and public consensus over speed and economic exploitation. This project requires an Environmental Impact Statement, a much more rigorous analysis than the Environmental Assessment the agency has put forward.

The Screens have provided clear standards for forest management in Eastern Oregon for over 25 years. There is not an urgent need for a rapid assessment and revision of these landmark environmental protections, especially given the coronavirus pandemic, economic and social challenges facing America, making public engagement difficult during this unprecedented time. The Screens have been attacked by industry, politicians and others who desire to return to aggressive logging on public lands. The Forest Service itself benefits financially from logging larger, more lucrative trees and has a record of abusing discretion and ignoring science in carrying out projects targeted at large trees.

I support protection and restoration of forests, wildlife, and waterways on our public lands that create positive economic and social outcomes for our communities. Our forests should not be exploited for short-term profit or political gain. I support a balanced, transparent, comprehensive, and scientifically sound process to change rules that govern forest management. This process must prioritize wildlife protection, climate resilience, and public consensus over speed and economic exploitation.

Any changes must require mandatory standards, not guidelines that are wide open to interpretation and abuse by managers, logging companies and the current administration. I support standards that also protect old trees (>150 yrs old) that are smaller than 21" DBH. The Proposed Action 2.2 OLD TREE AND LARGE TREE GUIDELINE WITH ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT (PROPOSED ACTION) should be reworked to maintain the current standard:

"Outside of LOS, many types of timber sale activities are allowed. The intent is still to maintain and/or enhance LOS components in stands subject to timber harvest as much as possible, by adhering to the following standards: a) Maintain all remnant late and old seral and/or structural live trees = 21-inch dbh that currently exist

within stands proposed for harvest activities ..."

IN ADDITION, the new standard (not guideline) should include retaining and recruiting old trees. The current protective standard for snags (standing dead trees) that seeks to provide adequate habitat for wildlife must be maintained. The language must be reworked such that managers can be held accountable and all parties (logging interests, USFS, conservationists, Tribes, local elected officials, etc.) can find common ground prior to any cutting based on a clear understanding of what is and is not allowed on our public lands. "Guidelines" are not enforceable and do not allow for this accountability, understanding and protection of large and old trees.

Thank you for your consideration.