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Organization: First American Bank

Title: President

Comments: It has come to my attention that the USDA Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest, Sacramento Ranger District is considering Wilderness Designations in certain areas of the District. Furthermore, it appears that the two areas under consideration have for many years included man-made infrastructure, including maintained and unmaintained roads, utility transmission and services, and water systems, just to name a few. While these items alone should disqualify these two areas, the other consideration should be with regard to the impact on the allotment owner's investment value as well as the collateral assignments associated. Forest permits, through assignment, represent significant collateral value to banks and other lenders who have financed these purchases for many, many years. Without question, the proposed designations will negatively affect the ability of banks and other lenders to consider such economically important and viable ranching operations in the future. It will also affect the livelihood of these ranchers and their ability to service debt already incurred on these allotments. The economic contribution of agriculture to the south-central mountain communities, I would estimate, is quite significant and the proposed designations will have a significant impact on those economies. The proposed designations and the future consequences is an even more personal issue for me. I grew up on a forest allotment ranch on the District, and my father and grandfather both spent more than 30 years each working for the Forest Service in the Sacramento Ranger District. At one time, there were designations made with regard to the Spotted Owl, specifically in the McGee Canyon area. Roads were closed, access was limited, and forest management was non-existent for many years. In 2011, high winds caused a power line on Iames Canyon, just above Mayhill, to spark a significant wildfire. My mother lost everything she owned in that unnecessary and avoidable fire that resulted from a similar designation. My family homesteaded just below Mayhill on the Penasco. Priceless heirlooms of that heritage were taken from my family in less than an hour of the fire starting. There is no doubt that the designations and management practices of past forest management officials caused this loss to my family. I ask you to consider the economic impacts these designations will have to the ranchers and the economy of the mountain communities. I also respectfully demand that you consider the significance and importance of today's decisions on tomorrow's families who very likely will have a similar experience as my family has. Thank you for your consideration.