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Comments: Dear Madam Secretary

I wish to speak as a private citizen strongly endorsing President Biden's initiative to protect old growth forests. While I am not qualified to define old growth forests from a scientific perspective, I can speak to the profound effect on our humanity and our health of having this all too precious resource be maintained and protected. I am a farmer's daughter so grew up in touch with, and in debt to the land and nature. I kept that heritage and became a child neurologist. Now in the twilight of my career I look back, recalling that I have spent countless hours caring for children and their families, often against steep odds. I understand now how the world around us sets the stage for illness and healing. There is something about stepping into a forest that is therapeutic and immeasurable and beyond our understanding. We humans are not owners but caretakers of the world that gives us life and hope. We owe it to ourselves and our children to preserve this foundation of life. Please now is the time to leverage the deepest wellsprings of scientific knowledge about forest ecology and preservation to define and preserve and restore the future of these great communities of life.

Respectfully

Rebecca Ichord MD