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Comments: I am submitting comments in regards to President Biden's Executive Order issued on April 20, 2022 regarding the identification, listing, and protection of mature and old-growth forests on National Forest and Bureau of Management lands. I just want to comment by saying that I strongly believe that ALL mature and old-growth forests identified and inventoried on these lands should receive MAXIMUM protections possible. Old-growth forests in particular are now extremely rare in our nation's federal lands. Scientific surveys have determined that less than one percent of our Nation's original old-growth forests remain in the Eastern United States and no more than five percent remain in the Western United States. There are a number of reasons why ALL of the remaining old-growth forests as well as mature forests on our federal lands should be protected:

(1) These forests are excellent carbon sinks. They are the best sources for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing this carbon dioxide within the trees themselves as well as in the soil and also in the dead and decaying trees themselves. As scientists gather more evidence about the adverse impacts of human-caused climate change, it is becoming more apparent that our remaining old-growth and mature forests should be strictly protected from logging and other forms of extraction as these old-growth and mature forests sequester more carbon than younger forests. These forests, furthermore, remove as much as thirty percent of the carbon from the atmosphere and they do it at no cost to the taxpayers.

(2) These forests play an important role for providing both clean air and clean water for both wildlife and for surrounding communities. They filter toxic materials and pollution from the water that runs through the forests.

(3) These forests play an important role in minimizing erosion of the soil in these forests by slowing water flow through the forests and reducing flooding.

(4) these forests contain greater biodiversity and in many cases greater populations of many species of birds, amphibians, mammals, and fungi than younger forests. Preserving these forests will lessen the rate of disappearance of many species and thus mitigate the looming extinction crisis, which according to scientific research could result in the extinction of as many as one million species before the end of this century should present trends continue. Furthermore, there are a number of species of organisms which require old-growth and mature forests for their survival. The Northern Spotted Owl and the Marbled Murrelet are two well-known species of birds residing in the Pacific Northwest which depend entirely on old-growth forests in order to survive. The American Marten and the Red Tree Vole are two species of Mammals which also depend on old-growth forests for their survival.

(5) Old-growth and mature forests also play an important role for providing recreation as well as solitude and spiritual renewal for human visitors who come to these forests to escape the stresses and care of everyday life. There is also a growing body of scientific evidence showing that spending time in these forests provides health benefits such as reduced blood pressure as well as enhancing one's mental health.

In summary, I VERY STRONGLY BELIEVE that ALL of our remaining old-growth and mature forests on our federal lands be protected and that logging, mining, oil and gas exploration and drilling, and road building be IMMEDIATELY and PERMANENTLY SUSPENDED. Mature forests which are likewise protected will be given the opportunity to eventually become old-growth forests and thereby allow old-growth forests to occupy a greater percentage of our federal lands over time.

Thank you for allowing me to have the opportunity to comment on President Biden's Executive Order regarding the preservation of our remaining old-growth and mature forests on our federal lands.