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Comments: To: Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of the Interior

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. Saving our old growth mature forests is key to fighting the existential threat of climate change.

Climate Reality Portland is a member of the coalition of Climate Forests. We encourage you to consider that a mature tree is 80 years old.

As trees mature, they store increased carbon, their structure is more complex supporting increased biodiversity, they are more resilient to ecosystem changes, and they are more resilient to wildfires. All issues important to consider as climate change is exasperated by carbon released from logging, threats to biodiversity, alterations to ecosystems due to extreme weather events, and increases in the frequency and destruction of wildfires.

Old growth forests reduce the prevalence of flooding and erosion and filters and cleans our water. These forests retain moisture in the soil, avoiding erosion caused by wind and water. A Forest Service survey of Oregon's Clackamas Watershed found that out of 254 mudslides, almost 75 percent occurred in areas that were logged or had roads built in their midst.

President Biden's Executive Order 14072 clearly recognizes the importance of preserving old growth mature forests. These forests have an important role in fighting climate change, cooling our planet, protecting sources of clean water, and sequestering carbon. They also have been shown to be healing spaces for people, a welcome respite from urban centers. These forests increase the health, prosperity, and resilience of our communities. They are special places to hike, camp, fish, and engage in activities that revitalize our souls and connect us to our history and to nature. They contribute to local economies while providing important recreational opportunities to our citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to encourage a timely and robust response to EO 14072, saving our old growth mature forests, a solution to climate change and recognition of the role these beautiful places play in our society.

Thank you,

Karen Harrington

Co-Chair Legislative Committee

Climate Reality Portland