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Comments: Thank you for taking the next steps to advance President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies. As you know, protecting our remaining mature and old-growth forests and trees on federal lands represents one of the simplest and most cost-effective climate policies the U.S. can deploy at scale. But time is running short: the climate and biodiversity crises are growing exponentially worse and it is critical that you fulfill the President's directive to provide lasting protections for these trees.

For the purpose of protecting these climate-critical forests from logging, 'mature' should be defined as no older than 80 years. Critically, protecting mature forests and trees today will provide the foundation to recover old-growth ecosystems which have largely been lost to logging across the landscape.

President Biden's Earth Day Executive Order rightly recognized the critical role mature and old-growth forests play as a climate solution, and the urgent need to confront the threats forests face. If continued logging of these trees is allowed, the very values that let them play a vital role will be eliminated.

Scientific research indicates that logging of federal forests is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere that is at least comparable to, and probably greater than, levels associated with wildfires.

For these and many more reasons, I urge the US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Interior to work together to initiate a rulemaking ASAP (this year!) based on a definition of mature forests and trees as no older than 80, to permanently end the avoidable loss of their critically important carbon, water and wildlife values to logging.