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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I support President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies and ask that you take bold steps to enact this order immediately.

I am a 47 year resident of Petersburg, Alaska located in central Southeast Alaska and entirely surrounded by the Tongass National Forest. I use the TNF in some manner almost every day of my life. I have spent thousands of hours in an effort to end old growth logging in our great forest here.

Logging of old-growth and mature forests anywhere in this vast region, whether it be on Federal, State, Mental Health, University, or Native lands is a threat to the Earth's climate. But, to be clear, for purposes of this letter my concerns and comments pertain to old growth and mature trees in all US federal forests.

I also oppose the any transfer of federal forests out of public ownership as a political work-around to President Biden's Executive Order and ask that you strengthen the order by incorporating a prohibition on such transfers in the Order. I realize this may be a rare request in the context of the EO, but privatization of public lands is the clear intent of resource extractors and their sycophants in order to get around the impact of any prohibitions on resource extraction, including old-growth and mature tree logging.

These mature and old-growth forests and trees on federal lands sequester, at no cost, vast stores of carbon (35 million metric tons of carbon is sequestered from the atmosphere by federal forestlands and 17.2 billion metric tons of carbon) which would be otherwise released into the atmosphere. Protection of these forests and trees requires no effort or Congressional funding on your part, other than the will to do so. It is imperative that you take action immediately and conclusively and not allow this issue to drag on to another administration.

The good news is that local communities that transitioned away from the two timber pulp mills and logging under 50 year contracts in my region did so with no ill effects and in fact their economies are booming, contrary to the naysayers who opposed closure of those mills. The same can be said of the impacts following enactment of Biden's EO. Making a bold step away from old growth and mature tree logging now, will be a boon to local communities, the environment, and climate.

The definition of mature trees must include all trees 80 years and older. Forests composed of this age group and greater contain most of the carbon currently sequestered in federal forests and they continue to perform that function at high levels. Moreover, these forest and trees provide for important wildlife habitats, clean air and water, and resilience against floods and droughts.

Please act immediately to enact President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies.