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Comments: Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

Conserving our mature and old-growth trees and forests is the most important thing we need to do to support all life, clean water, habitat for wildlife, fire resistance, and carbon sequestration.

Earth Day Executive Order 14072, describes the indispensable value that mature and old-growth forests provide. Unfortunately, across the country on federal forests, numerous logging projects that cut mature and old-growth trees continue to move forward. Guidance issued to the Forest Service does not acknowledge the threat the agency's own logging projects pose. Instead, the USDA guidance falsely denies the active logging of centuries-old forests and refuses to outline any meaningful steps to actually protect mature and old-growth forests.

It is unacceptable that, rather than taking steps to protect our forests and climate, the President's Executive Order is being willfully misinterpreted to reinforce the status quo and justify more destructive logging, such as the Flat Country timber sale in the Willamette National Forest, Oregon, clearcutting about 1,000 acres of mature and old-growth Douglas fir and western hemlock stands up to 170 years old; the Poor Windy Project in the Rogue-Umpqua Divide, the only habitat bridge between the Coastal Range and the Cascade Mountains, which will log more than 15,000 acres, including 4,573 acres of mature and old-growth trees that are essential nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for the threatened northern spotted owl and many other species. Old forests in the Poor Windy project will be replaced by ecologically and carbon impoverished tree plantations, grown as a timber crop. These are just a sampling of old-growth forests that are in danger.

The Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture must make strong and durable regulations to protect mature and old-growth forests.