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Organization:

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Comments: Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

I am writing to support strong, durable protections for mature and old-growth trees and forests across federal lands as a critical tool in the United States' work to address climate change. Our mature and old-growth trees and forests are the simplest and most cost-effective climate solution available. The proposed rule would support a powerful natural climate solution, helping us address the unprecedented threats of climate change and biodiversity loss while also safeguarding vital sources of clean water and recreation for all Americans.

The Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture must take bold action if the Biden administration is to truly embrace mature and old-growth forest conservation as a natural climate solution. That action must include an open, transparent public engagement process that results in meaningful, lasting regulations that endure as a climate legacy.

Ensuring strong, durable protections for mature and old-growth forests is complementary to federal agencies' efforts to meet other management objectives, including securing clean drinking water for communities in a rapidly changing climate where droughts and floods are becoming more common; improving wildfire resilience by protecting large fire-resistant trees; and enhancing access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

This is an opportunity to give permanent effect to key climate provisions in the President's order and position the United States as an international leader in forest conservation and natural climate solutions, offering a model for other nations to follow. We cannot afford to delay.

Sincerely,

Joseph E Youren