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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." -The mature and old-growth trees on our federally managed lands are one of this country's greatest resources: these forests protect our drinking water, provide critical habitat for wildlife, prevent erosion and flooding, and -- because of how much carbon they sequester and store -- are an essential climate solution. Protecting our remaining mature and old-growth forests and trees from logging and development on federal public lands represents one of the simplest and most cost-effective climate policies the U.S. can deploy. Literally nothing needs to be done on-the-ground and no money spent (except on the effort to map them), we simply need to restrain ourselves from logging, i.e., any cutting and removing of mature and old forests/trees, from these areas.

I urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of the Interior to work together immediately to initiate a rule-making process based on a minimum definition of mature forests and trees of 50 years old and older, (to be adjusted by region, ecosystem and species to capture the age of reproductive maturity for all tree species), in order to permanently end the avoidable loss of their critically important ecosystem, carbon, water, and wildlife values to logging. Such rules can be readily structured to leave room for ecologically appropriate risk reduction of uncharacteristic wildfire, which is very largely driven by small trees and brush, not big, fire-resistant mature trees that have survived for generations.