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Comments: To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the protection proposed by President Biden to protect the Old Growth trees remaining in the United States of America. This protection is long overdue, and the continued logging of large diameter trees is no longer acceptable. The value of these forests left standing goes far beyond the temporary limited economic gain attained by logging and destroying the forest. My grandchildren deserve the right to experience these majestic trees.

I have lived in Southern Oregon for 44 years and have seen the devastation and damage done by clear-cut logging. The increasing drought, fire danger, invasive insects and loss of wildlife habitat is heartbreaking. Enough is enough! This protection must be implemented as soon as possible. The changes in stream flow, temperature and water quality are obvious. Once these trees are gone there is no way to bring them back. We live on 40 acres with a few ancient trees remaining. The stumps from the logging 50 years ago are several feet wide. They are not growing back!!!! In thirty years on the same land we now are beginning to witness the second growth trees getting big, but in the clear cut areas the trees are weak, spindly and continue to struggle years later, with beetle kill, poor soil, lack of diversity and slow growth. Drought is a killing factor as well as stream flows are reduced and rainfall is diminished.

Below are some important beneficial qualities of Old Growth forests.

- *storing and sequestering atmospheric carbon for long periods of time;

- *safeguarding biodiversity and being climate refugia;

- *Old growth stands reduce flood and erosion risk as precipitation patterns change;

- *Older tree stands increase availability of drinking water for communities struggling with drought impacts;

- *Older trees possess features that are more resistant to fire.

- *On the scale of an individual tree, research increasingly indicates that the rate of carbon accumulation will continue to rise as the tree grows older and larger. As a recent study concluded: "Large, old trees do not act simply as senescent carbon reservoirs but actively fix large amounts of carbon compared to smaller trees; at the extreme, a single big tree can add the same amount of carbon to the forest within a year as is contained in an entire mid-sized tree."

- *Older trees and forests can store their accumulated carbon for centuries. As a healthy tree ages and continues to absorb carbon, the absolute amount of its stored carbon increases, and even dead, older trees can hold onto their stored carbon for decades-or centuries-as they slowly decay on the forest floor.

- *Forests and trees tend to develop structural complexity as they age (more hollows in trees, more snags and downed logs in forests, for example). This complexity fosters biodiversity and can particularly support species that have specific habitat needs. For instance, older forests and trees in the West provide critical habitat for wildlife, such as pileated woodpeckers and bears. And large diameter snags play a key role in supporting wildlife in Arizona.

- *The habitat connectivity provided by large, contiguous forest areas spanning environmental gradients, such as latitude, altitude, rainfall or temperature, maximize the potential for key processes such as gene flow and genetic adaptation to play out, while also allowing species to track shifting climates.

- * Intact forests have a positive effect on the redistribution of runoff, stabilize water table levels and retain soil moisture by altering soil permeability. These processes interact with physiography to regulate the flow across the land surface and help stabilize slopes, prevent water and wind erosion, and regulate the transport of nutrients and sediments.

*Older trees often possess features that make them more resistant to fire than younger trees, such as the thicker bark that comes with increasing age and size, and lower branch self-pruning in some species that limits fire crown spread.

My definition of Old Growth Trees is as follows.

1. Trees over 50 years old and older. Depending on the species the diameter at the base can vary.
2. Trees in an undisturbed habitat with intact ecosystem
3. Large trees produce abundant seed cones and berries (Yew) for perpetuating further new seedlings
4. Old growth trees have a mycelium network in the soil which interacts with other trees, builds hummus and supports a wide variety of fungus, mushroom and insect population. This supports birds and other species.
5. Old growth trees and especially forests of them have spiritual significance for me and many people. There is a peace there hard to find elsewhere.

Thank you for this opportunity to have input into this important process of protecting old growth trees and forests.