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First name: Carolee

Last name: Colter

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Haaland,

As a dual citizen of the US and Canada, currently residing in British Columbia, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the President's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies.

My top priority is protecting our mature and old-growth forests and trees on federal lands. We need to do everything we can to preserve our carbon sinks. It is far simpler and most cost-effective to save carbon sinks provided by nature than to invest in untried technologies to reduce carbon sources. Yes, we need to do both, but it would be shoveling sand against the tide to wipe out our old-growth timber. No matter how much we replant, we don't have enough time for those trees to grow to sufficient maturity to replace the carbon storage provided by the older forests.

One of the most pressing threats to older forests is federally sanctioned logging, currently underway or under development. The regional policy for the Pacific Northwest defines mature trees as trees 80 or older. Applying this definition more broadly in a protective policy will conserve our most climate and carbon-critical forests. Such forests collectively contain the bulk of the carbon currently stored in federal forests and they continue to sequester carbon at substantial rates. They also provide, across forest types, vital habitat and biodiversity benefits, and important sources of drinking water and clean air for communities.

I urge the US Department of Agriculture and US Department of Interior to work together to quickly initiate rulemaking based on a definition of mature forests and trees as 80 years or older and to permanently end the avoidable loss of their critically important carbon, water and wildlife values to irresponsible logging and other threats.

Sincerely,

[your name]

We protect, connect and restore wildlands and wildlife from the Washington Coast to the British Columbia Rockies.