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Comments: I hope you will continue to take steps to advance President Biden's Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies.

I support the definition of "mature" as defined as 80 years and older for the purpose of protecting these climate-critical trees and forests from logging. By setting logging limits using this definition, federal agencies will establish a safety net that assures minimum protection of the ecological and carbon benefits these older forest elements provide for future generations. These older forests and big trees collectively contain the bulk of the carbon already stored in federal forests and they continue to sequester carbon at high rates far into the future. They also provide, across forest types, vital habitat and biodiversity benefits, and important sources of drinking water for communities. Critically, protecting mature forests and trees today will provide the foundation to recover old-growth ecosystems which have largely been lost to logging across the landscape.

President Biden's Earth Day Executive Order rightly recognized the critical role mature and old-growth forests play as a climate solution, and the urgent need to confront the threats forests face. If continued logging of these trees is allowed, the very values that let them play a vital role will be eliminated. Losing more of our mature & old-growth trees and forests to logging will only make the climate crisis worse: Scientific research indicates that logging of federal forests is a major source of carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere that is at least comparable to, and probably greater than, levels associated with wildfires.

I live adjacent to the Daniel Boone National Forest and Kentucky's Sheltoewe Trace Trail and there are an estimated 430,000 acres over 80 years old, comprising about 60% of the forest. The area near me has been logged recently impacting tourism and reducing the climate benefits. We must preserve what we have left!

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