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Comments: I applauded President Biden's Executive Order protecting our remaining mature and old-growth forests and trees on federal lands. This represents one of the simplest and most cost-effective climate policies the U.S. can deploy at scale.

A critical aspect of accomplishing this protection requires a clear definition of what qualifies as old growth forest. Mature, old growth trees should be defined as 80 years and older. 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.

In Kentucky's Daniel Boone National Forest, there are an estimated 430,000 acres over 80 years old, comprising about 60% of the forest. About 100,000 acres of mature and old-growth forests have been cut since 1980; making up about 15% of the Daniel Boone National Forest. We must preserve what we have left!

Protecting trees in the Daniel Boone National Forest over 80 years old will benefit the many species of conservation concern that depend on the mature and old-growth forests found here, such as:

Threatened and endangered Indiana, northern long-eared, and gray bats Numerous species of birds that are suffering from habitat loss such as the Cerulean Warbler, Wood Thrush, and Red-headed woodpecker Medicinal and culturally significant plants like ginseng and goldenseal The endemic Pine Mountain tigersnail, which is mostly associated with old growth In addition, the Daniel Boone National Forest is home to old-growth and culturally significant trees, such as the largest known Red Hickory tree, located in an old-growth forest in an area of the Redbird district that is marked for cutting.

If the Biden administration is to do all it can these protections must be made through binding regulations that will endure in future administrations.

To ensure a rule can be adopted on the necessary urgent time frame, with the opportunity for robust public engagement and environmental review, it is critical for federal agencies to initiate a rule-making process as soon as possible that would prohibit logging in mature and old-growth forests and define them as 80 years and older.