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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Chimera Draft Environmental Assessment.

The Black Hills National Forest Service describes the Chimera #61689 project as a fuel reduction project. The private land and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is justified for fire preventive cutting practices. The over story cutting will trade large carbon storing, fire resistant trees, leaving thousands of acres of dog hair and ladder fuels attended. There are three Alternatives: A. No Action Alternative. B. C alternative plans. We oppose Plan B, reducing fire hazard across the project area while also protecting the most sensitive resource areas, which is 7,514 acres of tethered logging at taxpayer cost of \$4000 per acre. This is a \$30 million plus cost. Therefore we support Alternative C, which implements the same types of treatments as Alternative B but does so at a smaller extent.

The Black Hills National Forest is more than a source of fence posts. Thousands of visitors come annually for recreation, fishing, boating, snowmobiling, and many other activities. Not only does this contribute to our economy, it contributes to our well-being. We know the psychological and emotional benefits of spending time in nature of which forests are a major component. These benefits include:

Mental restoration

Stress reduction and its impacts

Attention restoration

Improved mood state

Reduction of depression

Reduction of anger and anxiety'

Enhanced feelings of pleasure

Increased mental acuity

Reduced mental fatigue

Improved problem solving ability

Improved concentration

Improved body image for women

Increased feelings of empowerment

Encouragement of nurturing characteristics

Decreased risk of seasonal affective disorder

Mitigation of the impact of dementia

In protecting forests Darwin did not say "the survival of the fittest," he said that "Nature operates by natural selection." The story of the history of life is the story of a natural progression and richness of biodiversity, ecological specialization and geological sensitivity. It is not just rain forests and coral reefs. It is a rotting log or a forest flood.

The Black Hills National Forest has numerous mature logging projects pending that help in removing some of the best climate solutions from South Dakota's landscape. This letter, sent to President Biden, is based on science, and was signed by hundreds of organizations. The Black Hills National Forest is in the top 10 most threatened forests.

"We, the undersigned, are writing to thank you for your executive order directing the conservation of mature and old-growth forests. We now call on you and your administration to realize the promise of the EO by creating a strong, lasting national rule that protects mature and old-growth trees and forests across federal public lands from logging. Protecting and recovering these natural climate solutions would be a key piece of U.S. climate policy, a sign of international leadership, and an enduring legacy of your administration.

"Safeguarding and expanding carbon-rich forests on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands is one of the most important, cost-effective, and timely approaches to fighting the climate crisis. Mature trees store and continue to absorb large amounts of carbon in addition to providing the public with clean drinking water, habitat for imperiled wildlife, and world-class recreational opportunities. Larger, older trees are also more fire

resistant, and the rule would allow for necessary efforts to address the risk of fire.

"Unfortunately, vital mature forests and trees on federal lands are threatened by numerous proposed and ongoing logging projects, in spite of your executive order to conserve them. We need to ensure America's mature and old-growth trees and forests remain in place to mitigate climate change, and to maintain their natural benefits for future generations. Thank you for your leadership on these important issues."

Let us, as Americans, seek ecological importance that moves forward our climate forest initiative, remaining standing to safeguard sustainable standing forests. Let us seek a healthy natural forest for the future generations of Americans.