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First name: Bill

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the state of our forests and the need for urgent action to protect them.

North America has a fraction of the primary forests it once supported. If we fail to protect remaining old-growth and allow mature forests to age into old-growth, we are fundamentally failing to address a key impact of the climate and biodiversity crises at home.

Old-growth and mature forests are not only vital for storing carbon and mitigating climate change, but also for providing habitat for countless species, many of which are endangered or threatened. They also support the health and well-being of millions of Americans who depend on them for clean air and water, recreation, tourism, and cultural practices.

In order to deliver on President Biden's Executive Order promises, there must be real protections for both mature and old-growth trees - including from the threat of logging and 'inappropriate management' techniques by the agencies.

There is an opportunity - right now - to create the most significant federal land protection policy we have seen in more than two decades. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which protects 58.5 million acres of roadless national forest lands from logging and road-building, is under review by the Biden administration. This rule should be upheld and expanded to cover all roadless areas in the national forest system, including the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, which is home to the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world.

We should not be selling old-growth trees on public lands. You can manage these forests effectively without selling those trees. End of story.

It is beyond time that the management of our national forests reflects their actual values: clean air and drinking water, species habitat, space for cultural practices, outdoor recreation and tourism - the list goes on.

I urge you to act swiftly and decisively to protect our forests and the life they sustain. Please do not let this opportunity slip away.

Sincerely,

Bill Bailey