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Comments: Subject: Strong Support for USDA's Proposal to Protect Ancient Trees in National Forests

I am writing to express my strong support for the recent proposal by the Biden administration, as announced by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, to protect the most ancient trees in America's national forests. The plan to ban most logging in groves that play a crucial role in combating climate change is a commendable and essential step forward.

These old-growth trees, many over 100 years old, serve as invaluable carbon sinks and provide vital habitats for numerous wildlife species. The proposal, aiming to revise all 128 forest plans simultaneously, demonstrates a comprehensive approach to managing the 193 million acres of forests and grasslands under the U.S. Forest Service.

I appreciate the emphasis on preventing clear-cutting for economic reasons, particularly during a time when the preservation of carbon-rich forests is of utmost importance. The commitment to monitoring the changes in old growth nationwide and tracking efforts to protect them further strengthens the proposal.

While the proposal rightly addresses significant threats such as wildfire, disease, and pests, I encourage the USDA to consider additional measures to ensure the long-term preservation of mature trees that could eventually become old growth. Although the proposal leaves open the possibility of future safeguards, expedited efforts in drafting these protections would be crucial.

I acknowledge that the proposal allows for certain forest treatments to reduce wildfire risk, such as thinning understory trees, but urge careful consideration to balance environmental conservation with necessary interventions.

In conclusion, I commend the USDA for taking this important step towards safeguarding our national forests' ancient trees and urge you to finalize and implement these protective measures as soon as possible. This initiative aligns with the urgent need to address climate change and protect our invaluable natural heritage.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Anton Flores-Maisonet

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