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Comments: Adequate time needs to be devoted to the amendment process, especially when considering something as complex and intertwined as the environment. When we look at the Northwest Forest Plan, there is a rich history of protecting old-growth forests and enhancing biodiversity. However, the progress that has been made and the future of the program are currently threatened by the proposed Plan amendments.

The revisions are taking the climate crisis very seriously, but I fear that this change is being rushed without giving equal consideration to the valuable ecosystem services that old-growth forests provide. Biodiversity within these environments positively contributes to natural habitat resilience against disasters such as wildfires and drought, which is the type of natural support needed when combating the growing concerns over these events and climate change at large. In addition to supporting biodiversity, the Plan must further the protection and planting of mature old-growth forests that store large amounts of carbon. Atmospheric carbon is undoubtedly rising at a rapid pace, significantly contributing to climate change. If the Plan truly wants to make changes associated to both climate change and natural disasters, forest preservation is the answer.

Beyond biodiversity, the Plan has a duty to local and Indigenous communities. Local communities socially and economically benefit from forests and Indigenous cultures have significant ties to our forests and a breadth of cultural practices. The Plan has a lot to be gained through working with Tribes to incorporate Indigenous burning practices.

The Northwest Forest Plan has a long history of protecting and restoring old-growth forests and stream habitats. Any changes made to this decades old plan needs to continue that legacy, as any falter can throw this delicate balance into chaos. Continued biodiversity preservation needs to be at the forefront of the Plan, and, as it stands, the rushed amendment is neglecting the truly essential component that makes the Northwest Forest Plan effective. The Plan must move forward with its commitment to biodiversity to deliver on long established promises.