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Comments: I am a mother, a grandmother, and retired scientist. Advocating for climate solutions is of highest priority for me, particularly the conservation of forests of mature and old-growth trees. I am calling on the Biden Administration to enact a strong, lasting rule across federal public lands that protects mature and old-growth trees and forests from logging, allowing the recovery of old-growth forests that have been lost.

Forests offer the single most powerful and effective way to remove carbon from our atmosphere. Mature and forests and big trees are the natural champions of carbon sequestration, storing carbon for decades, if not centuries. They are a low-cost resource that continues to grow as we all benefit from the services they provide, including clear air, clean water, habitat for wildlife, a haven for biodiversity, and myriad options for recreation.

Conserving mature forests and trees is consistent with U.S. federal agency's efforts to protect communities from the risk of wildfire. Scientific studies show that mature trees often have thicker protective bark and mature forests with trees from different species and at different ages have multiple layers of vegetation-called "canopies"--that protect microclimates under their shade, keep temperatures cooler and enable the forest to retain more moisture in the air and soil, making them better able to survive fires.

As an Oregonian for almost 40 years, I would like to point out that Oregon's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands contain some of the most carbon dense forests in the U.S. As numerous logging projects move forward on BLM lands, these mature and old-growth trees and forests must be protected alongside US Forest Service lands.

Any rulemaking process will need to include robust Tribal consultation and engagement. And any protections will need to recognize the importance of these uses and will not infringe upon Treaty rights.

Given the outstanding role mature and old-growth trees and forests play in fighting the climate and biodiversity crises, it is vital that America establish the strongest possible safeguards for their conservation. We encourage the Forest Service to maintain its timeline for this amendment process, and robustly engage with Tribal Nations, the public, and other stakeholders.