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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Mile after emerald mile, primeval trees tower above the forest floor -- growing taller than even the largest factory chimneys. For centuries, these old-growth trees have grown in silence, stretching their arms out to the sun in order to play host to generations of birds, insects and mammals.

Their steady, silent growth ends with a thunderous crash when these trees are cut down and harvested for timber. After the chainsaws, bulldozers and harvesters have done their damage, the stumps they leave behind tell a tragic tale -- layers upon layers of growth rings remind us of just how many years of living history have come to an abrupt end.

Thank you for proposing to protect old-growth national forests from commercial logging. Our old-growth trees are critical for wildlife, people and public health, and this is a big step toward preserving them for future generations.

Please ensure that the final plan does not include exceptions that allow continued logging of old growth for commercial gain and please consider including protections for mature trees in the final policy. Old growth should be protected from logging in all ecosystems, including in southeast Alaska. The only exceptions should be for protecting public health and safety, including protecting communities and infrastructure from wildfire, to comply with statutes or regulations and for culturally significant uses.

If old-growth trees must be logged for these reasons, they should not be sold to timber companies. Instead, they should be left in the forest to continue as part of the ecosystem just as if they had fallen due to natural disturbances.

Thank you!