

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/31/2024 8:21:24 PM

First name: Renata

Last name: Browne

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a concerned citizen, a well-informed sustainable business professor at San Francisco State University, and a human being who would like humanity to survive on this planet, I urge you to act to protect old-growth forests. There are no better-performing carbon sinks that can come anywhere close to the capacity of old-growth forests for removing CO2 from the atmosphere and safely sequestering it. No amount of technological progress or planting new trees could ever grow fast enough to replace the essential service these forests do for humanity in sequestering carbon. Climate change is not some distant threat, but a crisis we must make giant strides towards solving THIS DECADE and leaving any room for destruction to old-growth forests is economically foolish, morally unconscionable, and dangerous for humanity.

Thank you for starting a process we hope will end with meaningful protections for existing old-growth and mature forests across the U.S. We should not be selling old-growth trees on public lands, period. Currently some 370,000 acres of mature and old-growth forest on federal lands are vulnerable to logging. A closer look at the administration's proposed policy language reveals an enormous problem: "Vegetation management within old-growth forests conditions may not be for the primary purpose of growing, tending, harvesting, or regeneration of trees for economic reasons." History has shown time and again that if all that is needed to log old-growth is to omit or downplay "economic" reasons the timber industry will do so. The proposed language would allow over a dozen exceptions to actual protection of old-growth, including "to reduce fuel hazards," "proactive stewardship," or "resiliency." However studies have shown that old-growth stands tend to reduce wildfire spread and intensity, while thinning them dries and heats up the area.

I urge the Forest Service to remove the Tongass National Forest (in Alaska) old-growth logging exemption from any further analysis in the upcoming Environmental Impact Statement.

Mature forests and trees, including their value as future old growth, also must be protected.

Don't put short-term and extremely short-lived profits that benefit only a few destroy the old-growth forests that should protect all of humanity in both the short and long term. Make the smart choice and protect what works.

Sincerely,

Renata Browne