

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/1/2024 2:04:23 PM

First name: Robert

Last name: Bauer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a representative of the forest products community in Kentucky we are very concerned that the proposed Old Growth Project will severely limit active management of our national forests throughout the US and keep them from being managed to reach multiple use goals and maintain forest health. The limitations on a wide range of land by this policy is not good for maintaining a healthy forest that by limiting active management the forest stands will be at a tremendous disadvantage as climate change, fire, invasive species plus insect and disease problems become more prevalent in the future. The Old Growth non management scheme will only make all of the problems more prevalent on Forest Service lands throughout the country.

The change to minimum management on these sites will have a huge affect on the local economy by decreasing support for businesses throughout the country that often depend on active management of the national forest. Setting aside these lands will reduce timber sales and many other activities that are improved through active management such as wildlife habitat which will result in a negative impact on hunting and wildlife viewing which supports local businesses. The end result in areas affected by the decrease in these activities will lead to loss of economic opportunities for the local economy and over time led to layoffs and closures in areas often dependent on the active management of forest resources in the rural areas of our country.

The top down administration driven management of our national forests is not beneficial and should be left up to those trained and working daily in the forests and not driven by political agenda's. The Old Growth Policy ties the hands of forest managers throughout the country and should be based on regional perspectives and not a one size fits all forests at the national level. Allowing local managers to implement strategies that work for their local needs and forest types will result in much better management to maintain the health of our national forest throughout the country.

Robert Bauer

KY Forest Industries Association