

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/14/2024 5:59:54 PM

First name: Samuel

Last name: Murch

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the language in the National Old Growth Amendment's current draft environmental impact statement, in particular as it relates to the Tongass National Forest, a location that is dear to me. Below I have included several points that are of greatest concern to me:

1. In the preferred alternative, I would like to see the 'de minimis' language removed and replaced with language that is more explicit about what is allowed under the exception to ensure the amendment is appropriately protective of old-growth.

2. Large-scale old-growth logging should be explicitly disallowed in the Tongass National Forest because it will impact our nation's ability to have a positive impact in the fight against climate change. I've seen first hand how the Tongass' ecosystems have been negatively impacted by logging of Old Growth, and the ripple effects this is having on the fisheries and tourism industries and the longterm viability of the forestry industry as well.

3. Old-growth and mature growth logging should be carefully managed nationwide in the years to come in order to provide opportunities for ecosystems to recover from over a century of short-sighted logging practices and invasive species.

These explicit protections are an excellent first step towards a sustainable future for generations, offering a ray of hope in our battle against climate change.

Thank you for reading this. I look forward to enjoying old-growth and mature forests throughout the United States.