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First name: Mary Beth

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Organization: Old National Bank

Title:

Comments: Secretary Vilsack and Chief Moore:

I am a long-time resident of Orange County, Indiana, and live adjacent to the Hoosier National Forest.

I value the health benefits which a forest environment provides. The trees take carbon dioxide out of our atmosphere and sequester carbon in the wood, leaves, roots and especially the soil. The forest provides protection for the Patoka Lake watershed. And, the HNF is rich in biodiversity with a large variety of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles. The forest is also home to hundreds of plants!

I am writing to let you know that the National Old Growth Amendment DEIS does not protect mature and old growth forests from logging. That was the intent of President Biden's 2022 Executive Order.

I disagree with the USFS claim that our National Forests need logging to maintain their health!! Miles of roads and heavy equipment used in logging actually do the opposite. This practice also disrupts animal habitat and compacts the soil.

Your threat assessment of June 2024 acknowledges the Old Growth forests in the entire eastern half of the continental US "were not evaluated" in the report "due to a lack of inventory data." This lack of data is an administrative failure and calls into question every management proposal in Regions 8 & 9! The current DEIS excludes them from protection! This violates the letter and intent of the E.O 14072.

The DEIS ignores protection of mature tree stands which are needed for future Old Growth! Western Forests as well have large amounts of mature trees also needing protection!

None of the alternatives faithfully implement President Biden's E.O. on Mature and Old Growth forests, which promised to conserve America's MOG forests on federal land. Increased logging levels in the plan run contrary to that promise!

We are in a climate crisis and we need to keep the national forests in tact as a main defense against continuing disasters such as wildfires, landslides and floods!