

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/13/2024 2:16:16 PM

First name: Rickey

Last name: Buttery

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed amendments to national forest management plans to protect and enhance old-growth forests in alignment with President Biden's Executive Order 14072. This historic proposal is a significant step forward in addressing climate change, improving wildfire resilience, and preserving old-growth forests' invaluable ecological, cultural, and biodiversity values. However, I urge you to strengthen the proposal with the following critical improvements.

However, I urge you to strengthen the proposal with the following critical improvements:

**Prevent Degradation of Existing Old-Growth Forests:** The proposal must include clear directives to protect and enhance current old-growth conditions. Management actions should be strictly beneficial, with a focus on preventing any degradation of these critical ecosystems.

**Recognize the Value of Passive Stewardship:** Many old-growth forests, particularly in regions like the Pacific Northwest and the eastern U.S., do not require active management to thrive. The policy should recognize the importance of passive stewardship-allowing nature to take its course-and incorporate it as a key strategy in preserving old-growth forests.

**Establish Clear Standards for Stewardship:** To restore and expand old-growth forests, the proposal should establish clear, enforceable standards and guidelines. This will ensure that sufficient mature forests are conserved and managed to achieve the broader goal of increasing old-growth distribution and abundance.