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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.