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Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

I am writing to implore you to take comprehensive steps to protect our old growth and mature trees from logging activity. The draft environmental impact statement is an important piece of legislation, but does not go far enough to prevent destruction of our essential old growth and mature trees. These trees are a vital answer to climate threat. They absorb carbon, resist wildfires, and protect endangered species. There are no substitutes for these precious resources.

There are loopholes in the impact statement that will allow logging companies to continue harvesting old growth and mature trees under the guise of stewardship. There is no reason to sell our essential forests. We know that calling a project environmentally conscious does not make it so. The health of our trees, forests, and indeed our planet is too important to allow exceptions.

The final decision must unequivocally protect old growth trees from harvest or any commercial use. Mature trees must be preserved as well in our national forests: they are our future old growth forests. The final decision must also clarify absolute protection of trees in the Tongass national forest.

The US must lead the way forward to fight climate change. Authentic protection of old growth forest is a massive step in that direction.

Thank you for your leadership in this vital process.