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Comments: Our global climate has been destabilized to the point of impending collapse by our extraction and consumption of natural resources. Globally and in the US we now face extremes of heat, disruptions of air and ocean currents, extremes of rainfall, both drought and flooding, and wildfires which dangerously pollute the air and destroy our best-known "technology" for capturing carbon.

If you look around the globe, many hundreds of thousands of people are already suffering extreme hardship in this fossil-fuel caused climate emergency. To say the least, it is challenging to count accurately the hundreds of thousands of deaths, and the economic toll is staggering. Billions of people are at risk, and the US is not immune. Mature trees are still our best-known protection against climate collapse.

Mature and old-growth trees and forests protect our climate by absorbing and storing carbon, boost resilience to fire, help regulate temperatures, filter drinking water and shelter wildlife. Old-growth forests-- which are the real ecosystems designed by nature-- restore and protect mental health, especially for our children. And don't we have enough craziness in our society already?

Logging old-growth forests for the clever arguments of private gain deprives everyone of the benefits of our largest, oldest trees-- the ones that do the "job" of trees the most effectively, and the best completely benign/ no-impact "carbon capture" technology we are ever likely to have.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement fails to protect old-growth trees and forests. The proposal allows old-growth trees to be sent to the mill and allows agency staff to manage old-growth out of existence in pursuit of "proactive stewardship" goals.

The draft also contains ambiguous language that could be used to justify continued commercial logging of old growth in the Tongass. This must stop!

The final record of decision should:

1. End the cutting of old-growth trees in all national forests and forest types and end the cutting of any trees in old-growth stands in moist forest types.

2. End any commercial exchange of old-growth trees. Even in the rare circumstances where an old-growth tree is

cut (e.g. public safety), that tree should not be sent to the mill.

Cutting down old-growth trees to save them from potential threats is mental gymnastics. Old-growth trees are worth more standing. We still understand very little about the complex interconnections between life forms. We mess with nature and we mess with the future habitability of this planet.

The DEIS fails to protect mature trees and forests. Mature forests and trees - future old growth - must be protected from the threat of commercial logging. We must try to recover the benefits of old growth that have been sacrificed by past mismanagement.

Protection of mature forests can be accomplished in a manner that is consistent with addressing the threat of fire. They must be protected to aid in the fight against worsening climate change and biodiversity loss. And they must be protected to ensure that our children are able to experience and enjoy the physical and mental benefits of old growth trees.

We urge you to take this opportunity to protect our oldest trees and forests. Failure to do so undermines the objectives of this amendment, contravenes the direction of EO 14072, and ignores 500,000+ public comments the agency received on last summer's advance notice of proposed rulemaking.

There is no "economic" argument that can be made to justify "business as usual" in the face of extreme danger to life on earth.