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Title:

Comments: [External Email]Closing of Comment Period on the National Old Growth Amendment

[External Email]

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Randy Moore, Chief

US Forest Service

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Re: Closing of Comment Period on the National Old Growth Amendment,
Citizens Overwhelmingly Call for Strong Protections for Old-Growth,
Mature Forests

Dear Chief:

Today marks the closing of a public comment period seeking input on a proposed plan that could protect the last remaining old-growth trees in the United States.

The United States Forest Service concluded a 90-day comment period on its proposed National Old Growth Amendment. The amendment would update management plans overseeing 122 national forests across the country to protect the oldest trees from commercial logging. Hundreds of thousands of people submitted comments, the vast majority of which urged USFS to act to protect old growth trees and mature forests, older trees that will age into old growth if left standing.

It is the latest action in the Biden Administration's effort to protect old growth, which began with a 2021 executive order to identify, inventory, and protect old-growth forests on federal lands.

Only a fraction of the country's old growth forests remain standing, but they do not currently enjoy any federal protections from logging. Recent studies have confirmed the unparalleled ability of mature and old growth trees to absorb and store carbon pollution.

USFS will now review the submitted public comments for possible changes to the proposed amendment, which does not currently include protections for mature forests. A final proposal is expected in January 2025.

Only a fraction of the country's old growth forests are still standing, and what we have left is too precious to cut down. More than three-quarters of a million people have made their voices heard and told the Forest Service to protect these ancient trees and the mature forests that are the next generation of old growth. It's now up to the Forest Service to listen to them, we cannot afford to miss this opportunity. Once again the Forest Service is called upon to fulfill President Biden's executive order and preserve these giants for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:
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