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Comments: I recognize that years of fire suppression policies and a changing climate have resulted in significant tree mortality in our National Forests in California. I have personally witnessed some of the die-back and it is devastating. I am supportive of the use of some vegetation pretreatments and prescribed fire adjacent to infrastructure and significant, irreplaceable natural wonders (e.g. historic redwoods) outside of wilderness areas.

I am strongly opposed to using such techniques inside wilderness areas, and therefore support Alternative C, the Wilderness Exclusion Alternative. Wilderness areas must remain free of human intervention. The only fires in wilderness should be lightning-caused ignitions and they should be allowed to burn naturally within the wilderness boundaries of the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests. We always think we know best what our forests need, but we've been wrong time and time again. We need the humility to allow Nature to take its course and shape the ecology. If nothing else, it provides a control to be able to evaluate whether our techniques result in an actual improvement or not in the overall biodiversity and health of the forest. This approach also ensures that the Forest Service remains fully compliant with the Wilderness Act and is not subject to costly litigation.