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Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service:

I respectfully oppose Northwest Forest Plan Amendment #64745. The amendment needs tougher, iron-clad protections for old-growth ecosystems. Trees shall not be cut for timber once they reach 120 years of age. Such trees and their ecosystems are beneficial as follows: CO2 storage and oxygen production, irreplaceable wildlife habitat, and microclimates.

Carbon storage and oxygen production are important as they directly offset conditions of climate change. Irreplaceable wildlife habitat is vital to ensure conditions conducive to well-being of all beings, human and non-human alike. Preservation of microclimates is essential to promote sustainable water cycle. Those conditions control processes of evaporation and transpiration, effecting necessary precipitation. Sustaining old-growth ecosystems provides increased protection from wildfire. Young and monoculture forests are not mature nor diverse enough to offer such benefits. Current aggressive logging practices, which include clear-cutting, accelerate negative impact on ecosystems and climate.

Indigenous peoples must be included in Northwest Forest Plan. Their respectful input is a valued and necessary element. They are the original stewards of the ecosystems and derive cultural heritage from their traditional homelands. Preservation of old-growth ecosystems sustains these traditional areas, thus ensuring continued indigenous cultural activities for generations to come. Support full participation of these sovereign peoples in Forest-Service decision-making. Consult with them regarding cultural burning practices, support first food harvesting, and implement youth education into the Plan.

Until such items are included, I respectfully oppose Northwest Forest Plan Amendment #64745.

With gratitude,

Larry Sipe