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First name: Chris

Last name: Enlow

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings,

First and foremost, thank you for taking the time to read my comments regarding the Northwest Forest Plan.

Born and raised in Newburgh, Indiana, I have a strong sense of the extractive industry's vital role in local economies, from coal mining to corn fields and a lot in between. Having spent my entire professional career in consumer products, I fully understand the importance of having access to raw materials.

My name is Chris Enlow, and I live in Portland, Oregon. I invite you to pause before we flip the switch on these proposed Northwest Forest Service Plan changes.

I want to shed light on two aspects that need your consideration. My first comment focuses on the importance of old-growth and mature forests, and my second comment will shine a light on the outdoor recreation economy.

1) Important of Old-Growth and Mature Forests

After serving as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in the late 1990s, I returned with a renewed sense of patriotism and a deep understanding of what America offers. This spirit still holds fast to my belief in a nation of the people and by the people.

Public Lands represent the best that America has to offer. We are truly unique in the world, and we believe in managing lands for commodities, recreation and biodiversity. Mature and old-growth forests are natural carbon-storing champions, resilient against wildfire and critical to mitigating climate change. Logging them would worsen the biodiversity and climate crises. At a more fundamental level, the air that we breathe and the water that we drink are nature's commodities offered to us by mature and old-growth forests.

2) Outdoor Recreation Economy

On November 24, 2024, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released new data showcasing the tremendous impact of outdoor recreation on America's economy. In 2022, the BEA found that outdoor recreation accounted for \$1.1 trillion in gross economic output, 2.2% of gross domestic product (GDP), and supported 5 million jobs across the United States. So my question to you, or rather I am asking you to take a pause for just a moment and ask yourself is giving the timber industry more access to Public Lands in the best interest of our rural economies. Look, the Northwest Forest Plan needs to be updated as a lot has changed since 1996 and so too has the economics in and adjacent to our public lands.

I share these two comments with the hope that you will consider just for a moment the fundamental issues at risk - Biodiversity and GDP. Board feet are only one metric to measure economic prosperity in this country.

Thanks,

Chris