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First name: Darcie

Last name: Meihoff

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a family of lifelong Oregonians who for generations grew up hiking, enjoying healthy forests, clean rivers, mountains and streams, we have a deep love and respect for Oregon's incredibly diverse natural environment. It's what makes the Pacific Northwest culturally and environmentally significant not just regionally, but globally.

A critical part of that is Oregon's forests, which are irreplaceable and invaluable not just for extraction and logging, but for all the essential benefits they provide including clean water and air, supporting diverse native wildlife and fish and combating the effects of a changing climate. Our communities and local economies also rely on Oregon's intact and healthy forests and our incredible natural environment. Every year, our forests help bring in billions of dollars in tourism and outdoor recreation to our region.

For these reasons and many more, strong forest protections are essential. By considering reducing or relaxing protections under the Northwest Forest Plan via the Forest Service's proposed amendments to allow for an increase in destructive logging practices, the Forest Service is effectively sacrificing the health and well-being of people, wildlife and the planet while also hurting our chances for longer-term, cleaner and more sustainable growth economies. The proposed amendments would effectively help line the pockets of rich timber companies and lumber conglomerates while taking resources and dollars away from our local communities.

The proposed Northwest Forest Plan amendments fall woefully short of protecting our forests. It offers terrible, inadequate and nonspecific protections for our last remaining old growth trees, with some proposals doubling or tripling logging levels and increasing the age for which old growth trees can be killed and sold off to the highest bidders. This is the exact opposite of what we need right now in the face of climate change impacts, taking us backward instead of forward, since it is well documented that mature and old-growth forests are carbon-storage champions and more resilient to climate change.

My family has roots in central Oregon-a region with vast national forests, wild and scenic rivers, fragile alpine meadows and clean water and air. That's why the outrageous and destructive proposal for increased logging in our dry forests also is extremely concerning to me. This unique ecosystem with its essential seasonal snowpacks, clean water and native fish and rare plants and wildlife, is an outdoor lover's paradise. It sustains a robust and growing economy that draws tourists from near and far. The idea of increasing logging practices that irreparably damage this incredible ecosystem simply to line the pockets of a select few is the opposite of helping foster good quality, long-term jobs and promoting sustainable economic growth in these regions.

The proposed amendments also do not do near enough to specify stronger protections for wildlife and endangered species. As the climate crisis and damaging past logging practices in our national forests are exasperating an extinction crisis, this again calls for better, stronger and more forest and habitat protections under the Northwest Forest Plan, not fewer.

I agree that tribal inclusion is an absolute must for any proposed amendment, and I applaud the Forest Service for prioritizing this and accounting for tribal sovereignty and environmental justice as part of any Northwest Forest Plan update. However, any attempt to pair this effort with plans for weakened environmental protections would once again be a disingenuous notion of tribal inclusion, meant to sugarcoat the Forest Service's own self-interest - a shameful and poorly disguised attempt to promote the Service's own goals of increasing logging for profit and meeting its quotas to sell off and destroy our public forests.

The Northwest Forest Plan is 100+ year plan designed to account for the needed amount of time for a forest to

mature; it should not be subjected to four year political cycles or in fact, ever be subjected to politics at all. Trump or any other administration should not have the license to rob and loot our public lands on a whim or for economic blackmail, which is why I strongly oppose any amendment that weakens protection for mature and old growth trees and wildlife habitat. We need permanent, solid and meaningful protections for our forests, and I call for the Forest Service to strengthen and expand protections for forest reserves under the Northwest Forest Plan - not reduce or weaken them.

Sincerely,

-Darcie Meihoff