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Comments: I oppose the proposed amendment to the Northwest Forest Plan, which would increase logging in our mature and old-growth forests. The proposed changes would weaken core environmental protections for our forests and create loopholes to allow logging in places meant to protect wildlife.

The primary threat to our mature and old-growth forests is not wildfire, but logging. The NWFP amendment eliminates protections for unlogged mature forests in those areas originally designated to be managed for mature and old-growth forests -- Late Successional Reserves -- and increases clearcutting of the areas originally designated to be managed for timber production -- mature and old-growth forests in Matrix lands -- while also increasing logging in dry forests. This risks increasing the logging on our national forests by 2 or 3x.

The current forest plan has kept towering Douglas firs, western red cedars, western hemlock, and Sitka spruce standing tall. Allowing more than 800,000 acres to be logged in these 17 national forests would further threaten wildlife and destroy some of our country's oldest stands of trees.

My family lives on the Olympic Peninsula, in an area surrounded by national forest lands. We use these lands to forage, to recreate, to breathe, and to pray. The national forests are the lungs of America, as well as our water filtration system. They nurture our wild salmon runs, providing food for orca and oyster beds alike. We must protect our forests for ourselves and future generations.

Please offer another alternative to strengthen protections for our mature and old-growth forests, not open them up to more commercial logging.