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First name: Nicholas

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Northwest Forest Plan Amendment #64745. My concerns stem from the potential negative impacts this amendment could have on the ecological integrity of our Pacific Northwest forests.

While I understand the need to adapt forest management to changing conditions, I believe this amendment fails to adequately prioritize the following critical issues:

Insufficient Protection for Old-Growth Forests: Old-growth forests are irreplaceable ecosystems that provide vital habitat for numerous species, store vast amounts of carbon, and play a crucial role in regulating water cycles. I am concerned that the amendment may weaken protections for these forests, potentially leading to increased logging and fragmentation.

Weakened Species Protection: The Northwest Forest Plan was initially designed to protect endangered species like the northern spotted owl. I fear that the amendment may prioritize timber production and wildfire mitigation over the long-term survival of these vulnerable species. The plans for wildfire mitigation may drastically reduce habitat.

Increased Wildfire Risk: While addressing wildfire risk is essential, some proposed mitigation measures, such as extensive thinning and prescribed burning, could have unintended consequences. Large scale thinning can dry out the forest, and increase wind speeds, which could in turn increase wildfire intensity. The amendment may prioritize short-term fuel reduction over long-term forest resilience.

Lack of Tribal Consultation: Indigenous communities have a deep understanding of forest ecosystems and have managed these lands for millennia. I am concerned that the amendment may not adequately incorporate tribal knowledge and perspectives into forest management decisions.

Climate Change Impacts: The amendment must prioritize forest management practices that enhance carbon sequestration and increase forest resilience to climate change. I am concerned that the focus on timber production and certain wildfire mitigation strategies may undermine these goals.

Lack of transparency: The public comment period needs to be long enough, and the provided documents need to be easily understood by the average citizen.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed amendment and prioritize the long-term health and ecological integrity of our forests. I believe that a more balanced approach is needed, one that prioritizes conservation, species protection, and climate resilience.

Sincerely,

A concerned passed resident of the northwest.