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Comments: I am writing to express my opposition to the U.S. Forest Service's proposed changes to the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), which I believe would have detrimental effects on the environment, local communities, and the future of our forests. The current Northwest Forest Plan has been a cornerstone in balancing ecological health with sustainable resource management in the Pacific Northwest, and any revisions that compromise this delicate balance should be carefully reconsidered.

One of the major concerns with the proposed changes is the potential weakening of protections for old-growth forests, which are vital to maintaining biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and the overall resilience of our ecosystems. These forests are home to numerous endangered species, including the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, and provide irreplaceable habitat for countless other wildlife. Reducing protections for these areas would likely result in irreversible ecological damage and the loss of critical habitats.

Additionally, the proposal to increase logging in certain regions, including those previously designated as critical for biodiversity conservation, is deeply troubling. While timber production is an important economic activity, it should not come at the expense of our long-term environmental health. The practice of clear-cutting and other aggressive logging methods can degrade soil quality, increase erosion, and negatively impact water systems. These consequences are not just environmental concerns—they directly affect the livelihoods of local communities who rely on healthy watersheds and forests for their survival.

The proposed changes also fail to adequately address the growing threat of climate change. Forests play a critical role in mitigating climate change by sequestering carbon and maintaining ecological integrity. Reducing protections or accelerating logging in the face of this crisis undermines our ability to combat climate change effectively. Instead, we need policies that prioritize forest restoration, carbon sequestration, and adaptive management practices that can better support the health of our forests as the climate continues to change.

Furthermore, the proposed changes lack adequate consultation with Indigenous communities, environmental organizations, and local stakeholders who have a vested interest in the long-term health of these forests. The Northwest Forest Plan was developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders, and any proposed amendments should respect this collaborative process by engaging these groups in meaningful dialogue. Ignoring their expertise and perspectives is a disservice to the communities most affected by the management of these public lands.

I urge the U.S. Forest Service to reconsider the proposed changes to the Northwest Forest Plan. Rather than weakening protections for our forests, we should be strengthening efforts to restore and preserve these critical ecosystems for future generations. Please listen to the voices of concerned citizens, scientists, Indigenous groups, and local communities, and prioritize the health and sustainability of our public lands.

Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to seeing a more thoughtful and inclusive approach to forest management that truly prioritizes the preservation of our natural resources and the well-being of all who rely on them.