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First name: Paul

Last name: Fraser

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Paul Fraser, and I am a native Oregonian. I am a public defender, which means that I spend my professional life standing up for the rights of others, being a friend to the friendless, advocating for people who have no one else in their corner, and serving as a voice for the voiceless.

I am a father to two little boys (3 and 5 years old), who love nothing more than exploring the natural beauty that is quintessential of our state. My wife and I, for the years before the boys arrived, routinely hiked and explored various natural areas around the state, finding peace and stillness surrounded by our state's amazing natural areas. We have been slowly able to introduce our boys to the joys of hiking in wilderness areas, and it has been immeasurably valuable. The wonder and marvel the experience exploring wilderness is something that cannot be manufactured or replicated anywhere else. They experience genuine awe when they find themselves surrounded by trees that are sometimes hundreds of years old; imagining how much things have changed and grown in the years that that tree has been persisting. They get to feel a sense of smallness amongst the sleeping giants, and feel a connection to something much larger than themselves as they ponder the human lives to have come and gone during the trees lifetime.

These experiences are vital to developing a deep empathy that will connect them to their fellow humans, as well as connect them to the natural world that surrounds and supports human life.

I want my boys and other children like them to have a healthy world for their whole lives (and their future children's lives, and so on), and preserving our old-growth and mature forests are vital to that goal. These forests are critically important to combat and mitigate the ravages of climate change; they need to be fiercely protected so that they can continue to support biodiversity, capture and store the increasingly present carbon in our air. These forests are naturally resistant to the increasingly frequent fires that threaten our region, and stand as the stalwart protectors of the more vulnerable spaces around them.

I want my kids, and other kids like them, to live in a world filled with the diversity of animals that are only possible with safe havens like these forests. There are so many vulnerable species of animals whose natural spaces are increasingly sparse, who take refuge in these protected areas. That protection must persist.

This is so much bigger than a single narcissistic oligarch can possibly fathom. This matters for real people, in the real world, for the centuries to come. Please do not let this administration loot and plunder our natural resources for their own personal, short term gain, at the expense of the futures of so many. Please protect these areas from development and harvest. Please ensure that my boys have access to old-growth and mature forests for the decades to come.

Please protect our old-growth and mature forests.