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First name: Taylor

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service Planners,

I am submitting this comment to express strong opposition to the proposed Pikes Peak Vegetation Management and Restoration Project (Project #66359) and urge the Forest Service to withdraw or substantially revise this proposal. Reasons underlying my opposition are listed below:

1. Lack of Adequate Scientific Basis & Rushed Process

The proposal is being advanced quickly under authorities that may bypass thorough analysis and public participation, with only a brief scoping period during the busy holiday season. This limits meaningful public review and does not embody transparent, science-based decision-making.

2. Threat to Old-Growth and Sensitive Forests

Nearly 195,000 acres are targeted, including areas of mature and potentially old-growth forests. Logging and intensive mechanical treatments at this scale risk degrading ecological integrity rather than restoring forest health.

3. Impacts on Endangered and Sensitive Wildlife

The proposed activities could fragment or degrade critical habitat for wildlife species protected under the Endangered Species Act, including Mexican spotted owl, Preble's meadow jumping mouse, and the Canada lynx. These species rely on intact, connected habitat for their survival and recovery.

4. Roadless Areas and Wilderness Values

The project includes proposed treatments in or near designated Roadless Areas, which are intended to remain free of road construction and mechanical disturbance. Fragmentation of these areas undermines their conservation purpose and harms biodiversity and watershed protection.

5. Focus Should Be on Community Protection and Home Hardening

If wildfire risk reduction is the stated purpose, priority should be on proven treatments near homes and communities (such as defensible space and home hardening) rather than broadscale logging deep in wild forests, which may dry out and heat adjacent stands and even elevate fire risk in ways some science suggests.

6. Public Engagement Must Be Strengthened

The limited public comment window and lack of comprehensive project details available for review undermine effective public engagement as envisioned under NEPA and democratic land management. Greater opportunity for input and robust environmental analysis is essential.

For these reasons, I strongly oppose the current project as proposed. I request that the Forest Service withdraw this proposal or substantially revise it with a full environmental review, stronger protections for sensitive ecosystems and species, and a focused effort on community-centered wildfire risk reduction.

Thank you for considering my comment.

Sincerely,

Taylor Bright