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Comments: Please halt Forestwide Thinning Analysis #68852.

This proposal departs from long standing, science based Forest Service practices. Increasing the allowable cut diameter from 20 inches to 26 inches targets much older-and often the healthiest-trees. As Kathy Johnson of Pilchuck Audubon Society notes, "Thinning really dense forests, where some smaller trees are cut and larger trees left behind, isn't necessarily a bad thing. But this is designed to be a commercially viable harvest. That means taking bigger trees."

Reducing the time and scope of environmental review means proceeding without a clear understanding of the project's impacts. "It's impossible to conduct an adequate environmental analysis under this approach. You don't know what they're actually going to do.

At a time when climate driven wildfires are a major public concern, many assume thinning is being proposed to reduce fire risk. Yet fuel reduction is not listed as a primary goal of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Forestwide Thinning Project. As Forest Service staff have stated, This thinning is not being proposed specifically for fire treatment.

There is a long history in Washington of recognizing that our forests require careful, science based planning to protect wildlife, safeguard water, and ensure these landscapes endure for future generations. Forestwide Thinning Analysis #68852 is rushed, inadequately analyzed, and inconsistent with that legacy of stewardship. For these reasons, this project should not move forward.