

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/26/2026 7:59:11 PM

First name: Hope

Last name: Velasco

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I teach college-level courses about the history of humankind's relationship to nature. One of the topics we cover is the 19th-century establishment of National Parks and Forests as part of a public trust and early efforts in conservation.

National forests belong to the PUBLIC, not to private timber interests.

The Forest Service's proposal to loosen logging restrictions and bypass environmental reviews undermines decades of conservation policy designed to protect clean water, wildlife, and surrounding communities. Fast-tracking commercial timber projects under the guise of bureaucratic streamlining cuts everyday citizens out of the conversation and removes the scientific oversight required to safeguard these landscapes. Healthy, intact forests provide essential natural buffers against erosion, protect drinking water reservoirs, and store vast amounts of carbon. Rushing timber sales without thorough impact assessments directly jeopardizes these shared ecological lifelines.

Furthermore, gutting these rules will not make nearby communities any safer from wildfires. In many cases, aggressive commercial logging has dried out and devastated the forest floor: removing large, fire-resistant trees leaves behind flammable debris and degraded soils and promotes dense, flammable brush and weeds to grow in their place.

Rather than using broad exemptions to greenlight destructive cuts behind closed doors, the agency should focus resources where they actually matter: defensible space around homes and targeted, science-based thinning in the immediate wildland-urban interface.

My mother lived and died in Oregon, and she would be horrified to see this brazen undoing of the public trust.

Public lands require open public accountability, and this proposal should be withdrawn.