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Comments: My tax money funds this project, and before it does I want to see alternatives that might reduce logging, road building, or burning intensity. The agency has not provided them, and that failure needs an answer.

The document states, at Alternatives to the Proposed Action, that "no action alternatives to the proposed action have been analyzed in detail." The agency used emergency authority under the 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to limit this environmental assessment to only the proposed action and a no-action baseline. That is a procedural choice, not a finding that no reasonable middle ground existed. For a 46,844-acre National Forest project spanning the Hell Canyon Ranger District and Black Hills National Forest across South Dakota and Wyoming, the public deserves to see what a scaled-back alternative would look like: less road construction, reduced harvest intensity, lower burn prescription. The agency should explain in detail, on the record, why no alternative between full build-out and no action was feasible, or it should develop and compare a genuine range of action alternatives before any decision is finalized.

The legal justification for which stands qualify for final removal harvest is equally thin. The agency acknowledges, at the National Forest Management Act section, that "Due to limited recent stand inventory data, stand age is used as a proxy; all stands 120 years or older are assumed to have reached CMAI." The Culmination of Mean Annual Increment calculation under 16 USC 1604(m) is a legally mandated growth measurement, not an age classification exercise. Substituting age for actual inventory data because current measurements are unavailable is not the same as demonstrating that a stand has reached peak growth. The agency should collect and disclose the current stand inventory data needed to support this determination, or explain why an age-based proxy satisfies the statutory requirement. I want a direct response to that question.

Responsible management of public land starts with honest accounting, real alternatives, and defensible data. This project has not yet shown me either.