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Last name: Rodriguez

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Tongass

The following text was copy/pasted from an attached letter. The system cannot display the formatting, graphics, or tables from the attached original.

In Regards to the rule change proposal I would like to express my alarm at the decision to open up the Tongass for logging. I would like to put forth several reasons for my disapproval of this rule change. The least being the preservation of something that is irreplaceable, the strongest being a threat to the security of the world.

There was a time on this planet where trees were as big around as a house. Trees could easily be 25 feet in diameter or more. It's hard to even imagine a tree on this scale. Most of us who are alive today have never seen an old growth tree. If we do wish to see one we will have to travel to a national park where the last of their kind are protected. Even many of our largest trees of today would be considered mere saplings in comparison to the old growth trees.

These old growth trees are a treasure. Once they are gone we can never get them back. Many of the trees in the Tongass are over 800 years old. It would take around 11 lifetimes at 70 years each to reach the age of the trees in the Tongass. I would say that is a treasure worth protecting.

Before the industrial revolution our planet was covered in ancient trees, in less than two lifetimes we have reduced the worlds forests to sapling sized trees. The Tongass is one of the largest remaining intact temperate rain forests left in the entire world. You hear people fighting to save the Amazon, but what about the forests on our own soil? Although the Tongass consists of 17 million acres, only 10 million of that is forested, and five of the 10 is considered old growth. 50% of the old growth has already been logged.

I could go on and on about the value our forests hold as a treasure, and funnily enough, the Tongass is known as [ldquo]The Crown Jewel[rdquo]. But that is not the reason for my plea today, that is only an aside.

Here we are in a race to stop climate change, looking feverishly for the next greatest new technology to scrub CO2 out of the air, but here we have in our midst biological CO2 scrubbers that already exist, in a perfected form. We don't have to buy them they already exist, but we would raze them to the ground instead of protecting them. The value of the old growth tree cannot be over emphasized. Old growth trees absorb more carbon than younger trees, due to the fact that they grow faster. We are facing a time in our world where we can use all the carbon sinks and absorbers we can get. This is of great importance in the fight against climate change.

It's hard to imagine that there could be a reason more imporant than carbon caputre or just plain preserving them because they are the last of their kind on our planet and cannot be replaced. But sadly there is a reason that far surpasses both of those. It is a matter of national security. It is a matter that will change the course of our future, and destiny as species on this planet.

In as little as 10 years 1/2 of our world could be facing water shortages, many places could run dry. America will not be unaffected from this issue. We are already experiencing it now. It is not just something in the far off future, water insecurity is already on our door step. Here we are running around thinking of what great new technology will save us, while the answer is right in front of our noses. We are logging our forests like never before, without

realizing the important role they play in climate change.

When we cut down forests we cause desertification, soil erosion. We cause entire ecosystems to break down. When we change the land, and remove the trees we effectively change the climate. Trees produce rain through evapotranspiration. Trees breathe, and cool the air. You will notice in forests there is normally a cloud layer, that is because the trees create rain. This rain recharges aquifers, and it feeds rivers, and lakes. It literally cools the climate. If we cut that forest down, and turn it into a desert. The water cycle will no longer be present in that area any longer thus disrupting the climate, and patterns. The conditions will no longer be sufficient for water to be produced in that area. As the water cycle goes the water will move elsewhere on the planet where conditions are sufficient. This in turn will discharge storm energy on the planet, the weather patterns on the planet will try to balance themselves out. But they simply cannot keep up with how fast man is changing the environment. Storms on the planet will become stronger as energy is released, there will be flooding, and drought. This will cause a domino effect. Crops will not grow, causing famine. As the climate changes people will be displaced. Think about what the United States does to other nations for resources as it is. We have leveled the middle east in our quest for oil. What will we do when it is water we seek? This is a matter of world security.

It's funny if you think about it, who would have known what a vital role trees can play? They are more important than we know. Their value surpasses that of gold. Every single tree, no matter how big or small should be considered as one of the greatest and most important living beings on our planet. We should be working feverishly to replant every single tree that we have razed, and we should be doing everything in our power to preserve every single tree that is standing today. It sounds so simple but trees have the ability to help stop our coming water crisis and help to restore our climate. Not to mention the ability they have to cool the climate, as they release particles into the air thickening the clouds reflecting the sunlight back out into space.

The more trees we cut down the hotter it becomes because trees are no longer breathing and cooling the air and creating rain. This in turn causes drought. During hot weather and droughts trees cease absorbing carbon. When this happens even the trees that we do have are not scrubbing the air. It is imperative that we restore the natural environment in order to restore the balance in nature, in turn saving the planet and ourselves.

If you go forward with logging you will be causing climate change. If you care about the future of all life on this planet not only would you not go forward with the rule change, you would also slap even stricter rules on those that already exist for the security interests of your nation and the world. Our actions have real consequences. I beg that you consider the implications and reconsider your decision.

[Position]

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