

February 2, 2024

President Joe Biden

Cc: Ali Zaidi, National Climate Advisor, The White House; Stephenne Harding, Council on Environmental Quality; Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture; Deb Haaland, Secretary of Interior; Tracy Stone-Manning, Director of Bureau of Land Management,

Re: Request for an Executive Order to Place a Moratorium on Mature and Old-Growth Logging on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lands While the Forest Service Old Growth Amendment EIS and Related BLM Rulemaking Proceeds

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of our members and supporters, we extend our appreciation for commencing the process aimed at protecting mature and old-growth (MOG) forests. While recognizing this positive step, we strongly urge immediate action, emphasizing that an executive order from President Biden, which could be signed and issued now, holds the highest potential to establish enduring protections for MOG forests for generations to come. Our request, along with those in the [scientific community](#), includes issuing a moratorium on logging within MOG forests, and large trees generally, on all federal lands to ensure these forests are protected as the planning processes proceed to full protections for MOG.

We urge you to implement the following critical measures:

- **Acknowledgment of the Singular Threat to Forests: Logging**
  - Identify logging as a primary threat to forest carbon storage and biodiversity and address it as the foremost concern. This is the only threat that the Forest Service and BLM can effectively cease.
- **Closure of Logging Loopholes for MOG Forests**
  - The Administration's current proposal includes a glaring loophole for logging under the guises of forest health or fire management, currently used to conduct logging that is degrading the integrity of MOG forests. We request you eliminate this loophole. While the felling of some roadside hazard trees may be permissible for human safety, prioritize preserving felled trees as crucial habitat and stored carbon.
- **Inclusion of Mature Forests**
  - Include full protection of mature forests from logging, not just old-growth forests, and recognize mature forests as vital components of future old-growth ecosystems. For the Administration's proposal to be truly meaningful, mature forests must not be excluded from protections. The Administration's current proposal leaves out mature forests, which is tantamount to excluding the entire eastern half of the nation, since very little old-growth forest remains in the eastern U.S., due to logging.
- **Enduring Protection Regardless of Natural Processes**
  - Commit to the enduring protection of designated areas, irrespective of future natural processes like insect outbreaks, wildfires, or wind storms. A deep body of science finds that MOG forests most often act as climate and wildfire refugia. When these forests experience natural disturbance processes, including patches of high-intensity fire, the resulting habitat is [highly biodiverse and carbon-rich](#). MOG forests experiencing fire or other natural processes in recent years must be protected from logging, and current MOG

forests must be protected permanently, including when future natural processes, like fire, occur.

- **Full Protection for Tongass Old-growth**

- Remove the Tongass old-growth logging exemption from any further analysis in the upcoming EIS. Any financial incentive to log old trees on the Tongass conflicts with the conservation directive in EO 14072 and the global biodiversity and carbon importance of the [Tongass](#) that is currently transitioning out of old-growth logging.

Scientists have extensively [documented](#) the climate and biodiversity significance of mature and old-growth (MOG) forests, and large trees generally, in the [continental United States](#) and on the [Tongass](#), offering valuable insights for protections based on the best available science. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that even in the case of large wildfires, [they only consume less than 2% of tree carbon](#). In contrast, [thinning operations release a considerably higher amount of carbon](#) into the atmosphere over an equivalent area compared to wildfires.

The evidence is clear: we must cease logging in MOG forests, and large trees generally, both before and after natural processes, and refrain from blaming natural processes as a threat to these resilient forests.

We implore this Administration to exercise executive authority promptly, rather than postponing crucial decisions until after the election. The time to act, to protect MOG forests, and large trees generally, for climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation, is now. The power is in your hands; we urge meaningful and immediate action based on the wealth of evidence available to make the right decisions for our citizens and the climate.

Sincerely,

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|---|---|
| 1. 198 methods  | 23. California River Watch  |
| 2. 350 Bay Area   | 24. Cascadia Climate Action Now                                   |
| 3. 350 Bay Area Action                                    | 25. Cascadia Wildlands  |
| 4. 350 Chicago  | 26. Center for Responsible Forestry                               |
| 5. 350 Eugene   | 27. Center for Sustainable Economy                                |
| 6. 350 Hawaii   | 28. Chattooga Conservancy   |
| 7. 350PDX   | 29. Choosing Green  |
| 8. 350 Salem OR   | 30. Christians Caring for Creation                                |
| 9. 350 Seattle  | 31. Clean Energy Action   |
| 10. 350 Sonoma  | 32. Climate Action Now Western MA                                 |
| 11. A Community Voice ACORN                               | 33. Climate Communications Coalition                              |
| 12. All Aspects Ecological Restoration and Arboriculture  | 34. Climate Generation  |
| 13. Alliance for the Wild Rockies                         | 35. Climate Healers   |
| 14. American Jewish World Service                         | 36. Climate Healing Chorus  |
| 15. Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.                     | 37. Climate Reality Massachusetts Southcoast                      |
| 16. Anthropocene Alliance                                 | 38. Climate Writers   |
| 17. Athens County's Future Action Network, ACFAN          | 39. Coast Range Association                                       |
| 18. Battle Creek Alliance & Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue | 40. Coastal Plain Conservation Group                              |
| 19. Biodiversity for a Livable Climate                    | 41. Color Brighton Green  |
| 20. Biofuelwatch  | 42. Colorado Democratic Party - Energy and Environment Initiative |
| 21. Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project                   | 43. Concerned Citizens of Franklin County (MA)                    |
| 22. California Chaparral Institute                        | 44. Conservation Congress   |
|   | 45. Creation Justice Ministries                                   |

46. Deer Creek Valley Natural Resources Conservation Association
47. Deignan Institute for Earth and Spirit at Iona University
48. Democratic Socialists of America - Knoxville, TN
49. Disquiet Voices
50. Doctors and Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution
51. Dogwood Alliance
52. Don't Waste Arizona
53. Down East Coal Ash Environmental and Social Justice Coalition
54. Democratic Party of Oregon Environmental Caucus
55. Earth Ethics, Inc.
56. Earth Law Center
57. Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power and Light
58. Earth Neighborhood Productions
59. Earth Path Sanctuary LLC
60. Eco Justice Collaborative
61. Eco-Integrity Alliance
62. ecoAmerica
63. Education, Economics, Environmental, Climate and Health Organization (EEECHO)
64. Eighty2degrees Design Studio
65. Elders Climate Action
66. Empower Our Future
67. Endangered Species Coalition
68. Environmental Education Fund
69. Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Congregation
70. Environmental Protection Information Center - EPIC
71. Edmonds Unitarian Universalist Congregation
72. Extinction Rebellion Portland
73. Extinction Rebellion San Francisco Bay Area
74. Extinction Rebellion Western Massachusetts
75. Feather River Action!
76. Forest Keeper
77. Forest Unlimited
78. Forests Forever
79. Foundation Earth
80. Fox Valley Citizens for Peace & Justice
81. Franciscan Action Network
82. Fridays for Future Orange County
83. Friends of Bell Smith Springs
84. Friends of Big Bear Valley
85. Friends of Inwood Hill Park
86. Friends of the Bitterroot
87. Friends of the Clearwater
88. Friends of the Ferdinand State Forest
89. Friends of Trees Committee of Restoring Earth Connection
90. Friends of Wakefield's NEMT Forest
91. Gallatin Wildlife Association
92. Gallatin Yellowstone Wilderness Alliance
93. Great Swamp Watershed Association
94. Greater Northfield Watershed Association
95. Greece Baptist Church Sustainability Team
96. Green Snohomish
97. Greenenvironment, LLC
98. Heartwood
99. Heirs To Our Ocean
100. Holloway Educational Resources
101. Human Nature, Tree Foundation
102. Indiana Forest Alliance
103. Inland Empire Task Force
104. Interfaith Oceans Program
105. In The Shadow Of The Wolf
106. John Muir Project
107. Kentucky Heartwood
108. Kettle Range Conservation Group
109. Klamath Forest Alliance
110. Kootenai Environmental Alliance
111. Last Tree Laws Massachusetts
112. Legacy Forest Defense Coalition
113. Life Net Nature
114. Los Padres ForestWatch
115. Love Our Land
116. Magnolia Forest Group
117. Mason County Climate Justice
118. Massachusetts Forest Watch
119. MO's Defensible Space
120. Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
121. Muslim Caucus - YDA
122. Native Ecosystems Council
123. Natural Capitalism Solutions
124. Natural Resources Law
125. New Jersey Forest Watch
126. New Jersey Highlands Coalition
127. New Mexico Climate Justice
128. Nicaragua Center for Community Action
129. North American Climate, Conservation and Environment (NACCE)
130. North Cascades Conservation Council
131. North Country Earth Action
132. Northwest Environmental Defense Center
133. Northwest Watershed Institute
134. NTS Group
135. Occupy Bergen County
136. Ohio Environmental Council
137. Oil and Gas Action Network
138. Old-Growth Forest Network
139. Olympic Climate Action
140. Olympic Forest Coalition
141. Olympic Park Advocates
142. One Earth

143. Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice
144. Our City SF
145. Our Revolution Massachusetts - GND/Climate Crisis Working Group
146. Our Revolution Michigan
147. Our Revolution National
148. Outdooredge
149. Pacific Rivers
150. Partnership for Policy Integrity
151. Passaic River Coalition
152. Peace Action WI
153. People's Justice Council
154. People's Voice on Climate
155. Pisgah Defenders
156. Portland Raging Grannies
157. Presente.org
158. Progressive Democrats of America, Oregon Chapter
159. Protect Our Woods
160. Protect Thacker Pass
161. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility
162. Putnam Progressives
163. Rachel Carson Council
164. Raritan Headwaters Association
165. RESTORE: The North Woods
166. Ridgeview Conservancy
167. Rocky Mountain Wild
168. San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action
169. Santa Fe Forest Coalition
170. Satoria Sustainability Consulting
171. Save Massachusetts Forests
172. Save Our Woods
173. Selkirk Conservation Alliance
174. Shagbark
175. Shawnee Forest Defense
176. Shawnee Natural Area Guardians
177. Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
178. Sisters Trails Alliance
179. Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
180. Sonoma County Climate Activist Network (SoCoCAN!)
181. South Umpqua Rural Community Partnership
182. Southern Forest Conservation Coalition
183. Spokane Audubon Society
184. Stand4Forests
185. Standing Trees
186. Sunflower Alliance
187. Support Roaring Rock Park
188. Swan View Coalition
189. Tahoe Forests Matter
190. Tennessee Heartwood
191. Terra Advocati
192. The Conservation Cooperative
193. The Enviro Show
194. The Forest Advocate
195. The Rewilding Institute
196. The Wei LLC
197. Timbuctoo Mountain Club
198. Thurston Climate Action Team (TCAT)--Tree Action Group
199. Treehuggers International
200. Trees as a Public Good Network
201. Turtle Island Restoration Network
202. U.S. Youth Advisory Council for the UN Ocean Decade
203. Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub
204. Umpqua Watersheds
205. Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community
206. Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
207. Unite the Parks
208. United Plant Savers
209. Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
210. Veterans for Peace
211. Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
212. Vote Climate
213. Wall of Women
214. Washington Green Amendment
215. Wasteful Unreasonable Methane Use
216. Water League
217. Waterspirit
218. Wenatchee350.org
219. Wendell State Forest Alliance
220. Western Watersheds Project
221. Wild Heritage, a Project of Earth Island Institute
222. Wild Hope magazine
223. Wild Nature Institute
224. Wild Watershed
225. WildEarth Guardians
226. Wilderness Watch
227. WildLands Defense
228. Williams Community Forest Project
229. Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
230. World Rainforest Fund
231. Yaak Valley Forest Council
232. Young Democrats of America Environmental Caucus
233. Young Democrats of America Jewish Caucus
234. Young Democrats of America Rural Caucus