

# Open Letter to U.S. Senators: Oppose the Destructive and Deceptive “Save Our Sequoias Act” Logging Bill

21 April 2026

Dear Members of the U.S. Senate,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to oppose S. 4103, the so-called “Save Our Sequoias Act” (Sen. Padilla, D-CA, Sen. Curtis, R-UT). Contrary to its deceptive name, this is a deeply destructive logging bill. It was written in conjunction with a local logging corporation and other logging interests that would profit from the bill’s passage, according to one of the bill’s supporters in comments just before House passage. S. 4103 would exploit and devastate giant sequoia groves on public lands for lumber and dirty forest biomass energy, which pollutes our climate and communities. As explained below, **S. 4103 would: a) allow logging of mature and old-growth trees, clearcutting, and even logging of mature giant sequoias in sequoia groves; b) create a timber sales program in National Parks for the first time in U.S. history; c) override and nullify the Giant Sequoia National Monument and the 2001 Roadless Rule; d) implement a dangerous sneak attack that could allow logging in Wilderness Areas. Also, S. 4103 is based on assumptions that have already been scientifically discredited since the bill was introduced.** Here is what you need to know:

- Section 6 of S. 4103 would override the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to create a new “categorical exclusion” that would avoid environmental analysis and curtail public participation to allow and expedite logging projects up to 2,000 and 3,000 acres in size each in, and adjacent to, giant sequoia groves (all giant sequoia groves combined total only about 26,000 acres). There are no limits on the size, age, proportion, or species of trees that would be logged in sequoia groves. Mature and old-growth trees would be logged. Clearcutting could occur. Even mature giant sequoias could be logged. Notably, [logging machinery crushes and kills 83% of the giant sequoia reproduction](#).
- Section 2 applies the logging provisions to Sequoia and Kings Canyon, and Yosemite, National Parks, so the bill proposes to begin a logging program in National Parks for the first time in U.S. history. Section 2 also applies the bill’s logging provisions to the Giant Sequoia National Monument, overriding and rendering meaningless the landmark 2000 Sequoia Monument Proclamation. Further, Section 2 does not exclude Roadless Areas or Wilderness, which makes S. 4103 a dangerous sneak attack on the Roadless Rule and Wilderness Act, exposing these vital protected areas to industrial logging.
- Section 5 of S. 4103 deceptively claims to apply “best available science”, but Sections 5 and 6 put their thumb on the scale of science by declaring that high-intensity fire is an unnatural threat to giant sequoia groves that must be prevented, supposedly through logging. These sections also attempt to legislate another scientific fiction—the notion that giant sequoias cannot effectively reproduce in high-intensity fire patches, and that tree plantation projects likely must be conducted to “reforest” the groves. However, **new peer-reviewed scientific studies, published within the days and weeks after House passage and Senate introduction of S. 4103, discredit the fundamental assumptions upon which S. 4103 is based**, finding the following: 1) There is now substantially *less* high-intensity fire than there was before fire suppression in giant sequoia groves; 2) Giant sequoias can only effectively reproduce after high-intensity fire, rapidly growing to soon become large sequoias; in contrast, managing exclusively for lower-intensity fire leads to extreme sequoia regeneration failure and will not maintain viable sequoia populations; 3) Debunking the often-cited anecdotal claim that 20% of all large sequoias were killed by higher-intensity fire in just two years (the large 2020 and 2021 wildfire seasons), the research found a mortality rate of large sequoias of only 14.7% from higher-intensity fire over the entire past *century*, compared to the natural range of 21.1% to 43.1% per century before fire suppression, which maintained stable giant sequoia populations; 4) Giant sequoias are regenerating super-abundantly, and by far the best, in large high-intensity fire patches, especially in crown fire areas, compared to lower-intensity areas; 5) Where planting was conducted in a Wilderness Area, it was pointless, comprising *less than one-half of 1%* of the natural post-fire sequoia regeneration; 6) The natural sequoia regeneration in the largest high-intensity fire patch is now more than *21 times denser* than agency scientists projected it would be; 7) the density of surviving large sequoias within the largest high-intensity fire patch is nearly three times higher than government agency scientists initially estimated, because the agency scientists did not take into account the fact that some sequoias that initially appear to be dead are not,

and produce new green crowns after high-intensity fire from dormant buds under the bark through a process known as “epicormic branching”; and 8) High-intensity fire is unrelated to time-since-fire, debunking the “overgrown forests” narrative.

- Section 6 includes an “extraordinary circumstances” provision, superficially creating the appearance that some semblance of NEPA’s environmental analysis provisions might remain, potentially requiring an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement in some situations. However, given the statutory presumption of no significant adverse environmental impacts built into the “categorical exclusion” logging provisions in Section 6, and the historical unwillingness of federal courts to enforce “extraordinary circumstances” provisions once Congress has created new categorical exclusions by statute, the bill’s “extraordinary circumstances” provision appears largely intended to greenwash a destructive logging bill.
- Nowhere does S. 4103 acknowledge the vibrant sequoia regeneration growing right now in large high-intensity fire patches, the destruction of sequoia regeneration by logging, or the severe risk of infecting sequoia groves with potentially deadly and invasive *Phytophthora* root pathogens, which are pervasive in tree-seedling nurseries these days. Further, dozens of studies by the Forest Service’s own scientists find that [logging activities, including mechanical “thinning” and post-fire logging, do not tend to curb or prevent high-intensity fire](#), which is determined mainly by weather conditions at any given moment (hot, dry, windy conditions naturally result in high-intensity fire patches). Moreover, S. 4103 is a sham due to the fact that decades of research by the government’s own scientists clearly establishes that [fire alone can be applied without any prior tree removal—at far less expense to taxpayers and without the damage caused by logging—even in the very densest forests and in forests that have not burned in a century](#).
- Section 4 of S. 4103 would turn over the management of all giant sequoia groves on public lands to the “Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition”, which would be comprised mostly of representatives of agencies and entities that are actively involved in promoting logging in giant sequoia groves currently.

Some have pointed to the recent removal of some of the most obvious environmental rollbacks in the bill, before passage in the House, to suggest that perhaps the bill is no longer dangerous or destructive. This is simply an age-old political tactic, used in an attempt to secure the environmental rollbacks that proponents of anti-environmental bills really wanted in the first place. The truth is that S. 4103 is a profound threat to the ecological integrity of giant sequoia groves and giant sequoia populations, as well as a dangerous precedent that threatens the integrity of National Parks, National Monuments, and Wilderness Areas nationally, far beyond the boundaries of the giant sequoia groves in California. After all, if Congress can do this to iconic giant sequoia groves, even in National Parks and Wilderness Areas, they may try it anywhere.

Please strongly oppose S. 4103.

Sincerely,

1. 350 Eugene
2. 350 Seattle
3. Alliance for the Wild Rockies
4. Anabaptist Climate Collaborative
5. Applegate Siskiyou Alliance
6. Athens County's Future Action Network
7. Aytzim: Ecological Judaism
8. Bark
9. Battle Creek Alliance
10. Biodiversity for a Livable Climate
11. Biofuelwatch
12. Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project
13. Bold Visions Conservation
14. California Chaparral Institute
15. California River Watch
16. Cascadia Climate Action Now
17. Chance Art
18. Cherokee Concerned Citizens

19. Christians Caring for Creation
20. Christians For The Mountains
21. Climate Communications Coalition
22. Climate Crisis Solutions
23. Community Clean Water Institute
24. Community Nature Foundation (MES)
25. Conservation Congress
26. Defiance Canyon Raptor RescueDoctors and Scientists Against Wood Smoke Pollution
27. Dogwood Alliance
28. Earth Ethics, Inc.
29. Earth Neighborhood Productions
30. EARTHDAY.ORG
31. Eco-Integrity Alliance
32. Endangered Species Coalition
33. Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)
34. Feather River Action!
35. Fertile Ground Conservancy
36. Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force
37. Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics
38. Forest Unlimited
39. Forests Forever
40. Friends of Bell Smith Springs
41. Friends of Clark County (WA)
42. Friends of the Bitterroot
43. Friends of the Clearwater
44. Friends of the Notch Forest
45. Gallatin Wildlife Association
46. Global Justice Ecology Project
47. Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance
48. Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Cascade-Volcano Chapter
49. Green Chalice
50. Green Cove Defense Committee
51. Greenpeace USA
52. Heart of the Gila
53. Inland Empire Task Force
54. Interfaith EarthKeepers
55. Interfaith Oceans
56. Heartwood
57. John Muir Project
58. Klamath Forest Alliance
59. Kettle Range Conservation Group
60. Kootenai Environmental Alliance
61. Legacy Forest Defense Coalition
62. Local Environmental Action Demanded Agency, Inc.
63. Los Padres ForestWatch
64. Malach Consulting
65. Menikanaehkem Inc
66. Methow Forest Forum
67. Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
68. Move Past Plastic (MPP)
69. National Religious Coalition of Creation Care
70. Native Ecosystems Council
71. Natural Resources Law
72. New Jersey Forest Watch
73. Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment
74. Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey

75. Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative
76. Old-Growth Forest Network
77. Oregon PeaceWorks
78. Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice
79. Orthodox Fellowship for Transfiguration
80. Partnership for Policy Integrity
81. Prairie Protection
82. Protect Thacker Pass
83. Rachel Carson Council
84. Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation
85. RESTORE: The North Woods
86. Rockbridge Conservation
87. Santa Fe Forest Coalition
88. Save Lake Superior Association
89. Save Our Sky Blue Waters
90. Save Our Cabinets
91. Selkirk Conservation Alliance
92. Sequoia Forest Keeper
93. Shawnee Natural Area Guardians
94. Sonoma County Climate Activist Network (SoCoCAN!)
95. Spokane Audubon Society
96. Standing Trees
97. Streptanthus Research Group
98. Swan View Coalition
99. Tahoe Forests Matter
100. TCAT Tree Action
101. The Center for Responsible Forestry
102. The Enviro Show
103. The Ocean Project
104. The Religious Campaign for Forest Conservation
105. Thonet Associates, Environmental Planning and Engineering Design
106. Tule River Conservancy
107. Umpqua Natural Leadership Science Hub
108. Umpqua Watersheds
109. Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene EarthAction
110. Unite the Parks
111. Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment
112. Water League
113. We Advocate Thorough Environmental Review
114. Weber Sustainability Consulting
115. Wendell State Forest Alliance
116. Western Watersheds Project
117. Western Wildlife Conservancy
118. Wild Nature Institute
119. Wild Watershed
120. WildEarth Guardians
121. Wilderness Watch
122. Williams Community Forest Project
123. Women's Earth and Climate Action Network
124. Yaak Valley Forest Council