



For Immediate Release

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More than [200 Environmental Groups](#), and More than [200 Scientists](#), Urge Immediate Executive Moratorium Halting Logging in All Mature and Old-Growth Forests

Today, John Muir Project and Wild Heritage, alongside a coalition of over 200 conservation, climate, and social justice [organizations](#), and over [200 leading scientists](#), urged President Joe Biden to issue an executive order halting logging in all mature and old-growth forests on public lands. This united front is a steadfast appeal for immediate and robust executive action to safeguard our nation's mature and old-growth (MOG) forests to mitigate the climate crisis and protect imperiled biodiversity. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, which oversee most of the nation's MOG forests, continue to defy overwhelming public support for protection, scientific calls for a moratorium on logging, and the presidents' initial direction to develop conservation options for MOG. Instead, these agencies are now targeting the last, best MOG forests with huge new timber sale proposals. In the face of pressing environmental concerns and a growing consensus within the scientific community, our sign-on letters call for a comprehensive executive order that ceases logging in MOG while the Administration's upcoming environmental impact statement develops conservation options—a process that will take more than a year. The requested order would institute a moratorium on MOG logging across National Forests and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. The urgency of this request is underscored by the ongoing Forest Service Old Growth Amendment Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and related BLM rulemaking processes that contain serious loopholes to allow ongoing logging.

Dominick A. DellaSala, Chief Scientist of Wild Heritage, and lead author of the nation's first independent mature and old-growth forest inventory, stated, "over 200 leading scientists are calling on President Biden to direct the federal agencies to immediately suspend logging within mature and old-growth forests to allow the public process to proceed in good faith. In defiance of the president's wishes, federal agencies continue to authorize logging in these critically important climate-forests."

Jennifer Mamola, Policy and Advocacy Director of the John Muir Project, said, "Over 200 environmental groups united to acknowledge the unparalleled strength of mature and old forest ecosystems in fostering

biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and thriving after natural disturbances like wildfires, as long as they remain shielded from logging. President Biden must put down the chainsaws and ensure these forests remain standing while a full plan for protection is publicly developed.”

Key Points of the Sign-On Letters:

1. **Immediate Executive Action:** We express gratitude for the steps already taken toward protecting MOG forests. However, we stress the need for swift executive action through a signed and issued order. Such action holds the potential to establish enduring protections for MOG forests, ensuring their preservation for future generations.
2. **Acknowledging Logging as a Primary Threat:** The signatories call for the identification of logging as a primary threat to forest carbon storage and biodiversity. Addressing logging as the foremost concern is crucial, given its impact on our ecosystems.
3. **Closure of Logging Loopholes:** The letter advocates for the closure of existing loopholes that permit logging under the guise of forest health or fire management. Preserving felled trees as essential habitat and stored carbon is emphasized.
4. **Inclusion of Mature Forests:** The coalition insists on the full protection of not only old-growth but also mature forests from logging. Recognizing mature forests as vital components of future old-growth ecosystems is crucial for comprehensive conservation efforts.
5. **Enduring Protection Regardless of Natural Processes:** Signatories call for a commitment to the enduring protection of designated areas, irrespective of future natural processes. This includes safeguarding MOG forests from logging after events like insect outbreaks, wildfires, or wind storms.
6. **Full Protection for Tongass Old-Growth:** The letter demands the removal of the Tongass old-growth logging exemption. Upholding the conservation directive in EO 14072 is vital for the global biodiversity and carbon importance of the Tongass.

The [NGO coalition](#) comprises diverse organizations, from environmental advocates to conservation experts, united in their commitment to preserving our nation's invaluable MOG forests. This collective plea leverages the wealth of scientific evidence to underscore the urgency of protecting these vital ecosystems. The [scientist sign on letter](#) includes US representatives to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Nobel Prize winners, and globally renowned scientists and heads of university departments.

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For an independent analysis and inventory of the nation's mature and old-growth forests click [here](#) and [here](#). For an article by scientists calling for a moratorium - click [here](#).