

Environment & Energy

Forests Need Strong Federal Logging Rule, Groups Tell Agencies

By Zach Bright

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- Advocates seek mature, old-growth forest protections
 - Forests in nine states seen as being at worst risk
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Federal logging projects in forests across the US led more than 100 environmental organizations to ask the Agriculture and Interior departments to further regulate the practice in a letter sent Tuesday.

The groups request that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, among other officials, immediately launch rulemaking to preserve forests on federal lands, which its authors called “one of the simplest and most cost-effective climate solutions.”

The letter seeks a public engagement process to create forest regulation that goes beyond an Earth Day executive order signed in April by President Joe Biden.

In their request, environmental groups expressed concern that Biden’s order—to direct an inventory of mature and old-growth forests and later craft policies to conserve them—isn’t enough.

Last year’s more than \$1 trillion infrastructure law boosted funding to thin forests, which groups wrote will only ramp up federal logging projects.

The departments of Interior and Agriculture didn’t immediately respond for comment.

An environmental report released Tuesday described “a pervasive pattern of federal forest mismanagement that routinely sidesteps science to turn carbon-storing giants into lumber.”

That report, from the Climate Forests coalition, names the 10 forests across nine states—North Carolina, Vermont, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, California, and Oregon—most threatened by federal logging projects.

“The best way to protect these carbon-storing giants is to let them grow, but our federal agencies keep turning them into lumber,” said Randi Spivak, public lands director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

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