City Council

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January 11, 2008

Bureau of Land Management
Western Oregon Plan Revisions
P.O. BOX 2965 Portland, OR 97208

Re: BLM Western Oregon Plan Revisions

Dear Bureau of Land Management:

I am very concerned with the direction the Bush Administration is headed with the management of nearly 2.6 million acres of federal forests under the Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WPOR). The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) preferred Alternative (Alternative 2) would unravel the protections of the landmark Northwest Forest Plan, reduce protection for wildlife and streamside reserves, build 1,000 miles of new logging roads, and increase old-growth clear-cutting by 700% in currently protected old growth forest reserves and sensitive salmon bearing rivers and creeks.

This is unacceptable. The BLM's proposal is a myopic and backwards proposal that depletes our natural resource base for future generations by weakening protections for forests, creeks and salmon. The Northwest Forest Plan's protections should remain in place for BLM lands, not sacrificed in an out-of-court deal between the timber industry and the White House. Oregon ancient forests deserve permanent protection and should be managed to maintain important public assets such as clean drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, diverse recreation opportunities, stunning scenery, and jobs in forest restoration, fire safety and tourism.

The proposal also ignores the role that these forests play in regulating the climate. Ancient forests in Oregon also serve as an important carbon storage and sequestration resource to help mitigate global warming. The BLM's plans for increased logging in these ancient forests under the WPOR will take America backwards in efforts to prevent global climate change. Clear cutting and damage to soils from logging has been shown to release tremendous amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, while old forests absorb and store carbon dioxide.

It is disappointing that at a time when public consensus for old-growth protection and second-growth thinning has never been stronger, the BLM is proposing to clear-cut forests older than our nation and turn complex ecosystems into flammable tree farms.

Accordingly, it is in the public interest that the BLM reject Alternative 2 and the Action Alternatives proposed in the WOPR and work within the Northwest Forest Plan to protect mature and old-growth forests on federal lands in western Oregon. Federal forests in western Oregon should be managed for the greatest good for the greatest number of people over the longest time. We should protect remaining older forests and restore degraded lands to enhance water quality, restore habitat, store carbon, and generate new economic opportunities.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman

Bonny Bettman,
City Councilor, Ward 1

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