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In Support of the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

My name is Serena Barry, and I have grown up in the Illinois Valley area for 20 years now, and I am currently in my third year of college at Southern Oregon University working towards a degree in Environmental Studies. As a person who has a great passion for protecting the environment and a deep personal connection to the community and land that is being threatened by the Western Oregon Plan Revision, I am writing to voice my concern about the WOPR. I am a young adult now, with a long life ahead of me and my children and grandchildren. I plan on living in this area and raising my family here, and my biggest concern is for what the next generations will inherit from the WOPR.

The alternatives that are laid out for the WOPR say that the late-succession reserves created under the Northwest Forest Plan will be converted to a late-succession management area (LSMA). This is deeply troubling to me because I have witnessed with my own eyes the destructive management practices that the BLM have allowed to be used on ancient forests in the past. Oregon is scarred with the evidence. The Northwest Forest Plan was created to protect our last remaining old growth and the many diverse animals that depend on it. We, the people who live by this land, love this land, and legally own this land, do not want the BLM to do any cutting in our old growth reserves. Our local economy depends on the beauty of wild nature, not the BLM's definition of "structurally complex forests". Nature is much better at managing the forests than humans have demonstrated, and I greatly support the effort to restore previously logged areas in order to get the much needed timber for our industries and consumer products. Thinning small trees could offer more than 2 billion board feet of commercially valuable timber if actively thinned, while preserving our last, best public lands for generations to come. There is absolutely no need to cut down the most ecologically and economically valuable trees left in the forest simply for quick and easy cash. Old growth forests are far more valuable left living than they are milled, and they are the most "structurally complex forests" that nature can and will provide, and it's free. Our water quality, soil stability, air quality, and wildlife habitats depend on these forests, which makes them truly "public lands", and they shouldn't be used to make a profit that benefits few in the short run and impoverishes everyone in the long run. I am also very upset that the plan is

proposing to not require meeting the standards of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives. The protections for riparian areas and old growth forests has taken decades to achieve, and it goes against the democratic nature of our government to erase all of this hard earned progress with out a vote by the citizens who own this "public land" and who must live with the consequences of this plan for generations to come.

Another reason why the WOPR concerns me is because of the 3000 jobs it will supposedly create. First of all, mechanization and advances in technology has put many people out of work, and it will continue to do so. Fire will become an increasing concern because the WOPR will create an extremely hazardous fire landscape that is susceptible to large fires capable of obliterating square miles of plantations. The old growth trees have the thickest bark, and are the most fire resilient trees in the forest. As fires become more frequent and catastrophic in the future due to global warming and poor forest management, there will be less timber and a decline of timber jobs in the long run, not to mention the people's lives will be threatened by an even greater risk of catastrophic fires. Also, by replanting tightly packed monocultural stands of Douglas fir, disease become much more likely. Swiss needle-cast is already an epidemic in Douglas fir plantations along the Oregon coast. This disease doesn't kill trees, but reduces the growth rate causing up to 50% volume growth loss, enough to significantly reduce the WOPR's projected production and job estimates. Another disease is Phytophthora, the plant disease that caused the Irish potato famine, a classic example of problems caused by monocultural agricultural practices. The spread of this disease in tightly packed tree plantations could risk wiping out the entire timber industry in Oregon, similar to the Irish potato famine. Another problem is dwarf mistletoe, a parasitic plant that is easily spread in dense stands of Douglas fir, and it is well known to cause growth reduction, loss of wood quality, poor tree form, predisposition to insect infestation and diseases, and premature death. Over time, timber productivity is reduced resulting in less timber jobs.

Another facet to the economic perspective is the decline in the housing markets, which means a decline in the demand for timber products. A decline in the market means corporations will lay off workers. So in effect, there is no evidence or reason to believe that more timber harvesting will result in more timber jobs. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs that need to be created in forest restoration. There is no need to open

up our last reserves to manipulation and destruction when there are so many smaller diameter trees that need to be harvested anyway in order to make the forests healthier. It just does not make any logical sense to cut down the trees that are most needed in the environment when the same resource can be obtained in a much more sustainable way. In addition, the timber value will drop when harvests from public lands saturate the market. This will have the effect of reducing timber value on private lands. We will be selling our resources at the lowest price, which means timber jobs will either need to be reduced or timber workers will need to settle for a lower wage. It is also highly likely that forest migrants will get the jobs rather than Oregonians. These people, who work from state to state, have no connection to our land, no investment in our community, and the money that is paid to them is immediately leaving our community along with our treasured resources. However, these migrants get the jobs because they are willing to work for cheap, which shows that the companies who are doing the work are only concerned about profit and not the well being of the local community. We need local jobs, but not jobs that will leave the land more impoverished for the next generations and leave fewer opportunities for them to have timber related jobs in the future.

Old growth trees take thousands of years to grow to their enormous size, and once they are gone, they will never be seen again. To think that you can cut them down and in 100 years they will be giants again is a ridiculous idea, and anyone who believes that is simply ignoring the historical evidence that points to the contrary. In the past century, half of the BLM's forests have been converted to overstocked tree plantations, getting nowhere near the size of the ancient trees. Oregon has some of the last remaining stands of old growth and true wilderness, and to take it away would be to destroy our national heritage and our much needed ecotourism that sustains many non-timber related industries. The focus on creating jobs has been very narrow in that it only refers to timber jobs. However, the plans will have negative impacts on the ability of tourism dependent businesses to survive, make property more difficult to sell resulting in hardship for real estate businesses and employees. It will make communities less desirable for entrepreneurs who create their own jobs with home-based businesses and internet-based services, and impair the ability of a community to attract new business and industry development because the WOPR will sacrifice their quality of life and

environmental health so that a few timber jobs can be created. The O&C Act was created not only to maintain a sustainable timber yield, but to manage the timber in such a way as to support other non-timber related industries, while also maintaining the integrity of the water quality and wildlife habitat. The BLM has described in the visual resource index that the plan will cause major modification to the character of the landscape that dominates the view, and all O&C lands in Oregon are planned to have this level of logging and visual impact. This will cripple our tourist economy, very likely putting people out of their homes and jobs. Ultimately, the 3000 jobs the BLM claims will be created by the WOPR will more likely result in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in other sectors. The net gain in jobs is zero or below, which illustrates how truly devastating this plan will be to our local economies. Please do more research on the potential impacts such a plan will have on the local communities and economies before you so hastily put our livelihoods at risk.

Another one my greatest concerns is what the unintended consequences of the WOPR will be. How much money will need to be spent to do the work of purifying the air and water and keeping the soil from eroding into the river, which harms reproduction of many endangered fish? How much money will be spent fighting wildfires because of this plan and how much money spent cleaning up landslides? How much money and effort will be spent to protect the Northern Spotted Owl from extinction when some of its last habitat is destroyed? What about the many diverse animals that live in those forests and have adapted to that environment for thousands of years, such as bears, cougars, elk, mountain lion, wolverine, lynx, coyote, fisher, river otter, eagles, hawks, falcon, and numerous species of Pacific salmon. Old growth forests are home to so many animals and creatures that it's impossible to name them all. The Klamath-Siskiyou region is one of the most biologically diverse regions left on the planet. It is home to over 30 different conifer species, half of the 4,000 plants found in Oregon, along with 115 at-risk plant and animal species. Many unique species have co-evolved with the serpentine soils, and cannot be found anywhere else on earth. The wild rivers and watershed give this region the most value, because without clean and healthy rivers, the diversity of plants, animals, and people could not exist. Water from the Klamath Mountains drains into the Chetco, Illinois, lower Rogue and other Oregon rivers and streams, providing essential drinking

water for towns such as Ashland, Medford, Cave Junction, and Grants Pass. By failing to manage riparian areas as designated in the Northwest Forest Plan, our drinking water for the entire Southern Oregon region will be compromised. Not to mention BLM also manages forests that provide high quality drinking water for the citizens of Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, and 70 other Oregon communities. Along with the water degradation is a decline in fish population and the fishing industry. Salmon need cool, clean water, but the WOPR would remove stream buffers that shade streams and keep sediment from the water. There are protections for riparian areas for a reason, and these regulations need to be preserved. They are possibly the most important protections for the citizens of Oregon.

The BLM is charged with the very important responsibility of protecting our endangered species and our watersheds just as much as managing timber sales and receipts. This agency is supposed to balance the two objectives, not favor the timber industry over all the other industries and against the wishes of the people who rightfully own the public land. Not to mention, the WOPR is illegal in that it violates the Northwest Forest Plan, the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Water Act, and other laws by eliminating the protections for old-growth forests. Please choose the no action alternative and devise a much better strategy that involves restoring our public lands, not destroying them. Please work with us in the community to compromise and create plausible solutions. No one who understands the devastating economic and ecological impacts the WOPR will have on our communities supports this plan, and as an agency that represents the people, the democratic thing to do is to choose the no action alternative and start over with a more comprehensive plan that utilizes more sustainable management methods. Let's keep progressing in our management of our public forests, rather than hastily abolishing the hard earned protections of the last decades. We can't do it without the help and cooperation of the BLM, which is why I am asking you from the very depths of my heart to please choose the No Action Alternative. Oregon's future depends on it.