

Dear President Biden,

We, the undersigned North Carolina locally elected officials, are writing to urge your administration to enact the strongest possible protections for mature and old-growth trees and forests on federal lands.

North Carolina's forests are a vital part of our natural heritage. From the whitewater falls in Nantahala to the mile-high peaks and forested slopes of Pisgah, our national forests are a big part of what makes North Carolina such an amazing place to live and visit.

Our forests provide habitat for many species including the Eastern Box Turtle, American Black Bear and the endangered Northern Saw-whet Owl. North Carolina is suffering from the effects of climate change including rising sea levels on our coast, dangerously hot summers, and more extreme weather patterns. [Less than 1% of trees on the East Coast have lived to "old-growth" age](#), a huge divergence from the natural state of this region. In the face of biodiversity loss and worsening climate change, we cannot afford to lose our mature trees and forests as well.

On Friday, June 21st, the U.S. Forest Service released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement with proposals that could conserve old-growth across all national forests. However, none of these proposed alternatives would effectively protect old-growth forests in North Carolina. This is the most recent step following President Biden's Executive Order, issued in 2022, to develop policies to protect mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands.

Specifically, we are urging your administration to:

1. Clearly prohibit the sale of logged old-growth for any reason.
2. Lay the groundwork for durable protections for mature trees.
3. Recognize the unique condition of North Carolina's eastern forests and prescribe protections to fit our region, including reducing the widespread reliance on even-aged management, and deemphasizing the risk of wildfires in eastern forests to more accurately reflect our forest conditions.

We deeply appreciate your ongoing commitment and leadership in protecting America's forests and addressing the climate crisis and look forward to ensuring that mature and old-growth trees will remain protected for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Christina Jones, Council Member, Raleigh City Council

Carl Rist, Council Member, Durham City Council

Salette Andrews, Council Member, Wilmington City Council

Tiawana Brown, Council Member, Charlotte City Council

Megan Patton, Council Member, Raleigh City Council

Jon Feichter, Council Member, Waynesville Town Council

TJ Cawley, Mayor, Town of Morrisville

John F. Higdon, Mayor, Town of Matthews

Courtney Banks-McLaughlin, Council Member, Fayetteville City Council

Kim Roney, Council Member, Asheville City Council

Mary-Ann Baldwin, Mayor, City of Raleigh

Maggie Ullman, Council Member, Asheville City Council

Andre Knight, Council Member, Rocky Mount City Council

Christy Clark, Mayor, Town of Huntersville

Stacy J Guffey, Vice Mayor, Town of Franklin

Terry Mahaffey, Council Member, Apex Town Council

Kevin Mundy, Council Member, Winston-Salem City Council

Mary Black, Council Member, Raleigh City Council

Jacques K. Gilbert, Mayor, Town of Apex

Robert Murray, Mayor, Town of Waxhaw

Annie Drees, Council Member, Holly Springs

Parker Sloan, Buncombe County Commissioner, Buncombe County

John Chase, Council Member, Weaverville Town Council

Brandon Raynor, Commissioner, Town of Hamilton

Kimmie Rogers, Council Member, Lenoir City Council

Robert Wheeler, Mayor, City of Creedmoor

Dontario Hardy, Mayor, City of Kinston

Teagan Hall, Commissioner, Boiling Spring Lakes

Elyse Craver, Commissioner, Hope Mills

Mike Horn, Mayor, Lewisville

Tommy Black, City Councilor, Lexington

Barbara A. Mallett, Mayor, Town of East Spencer

Tracy Mattison Brandon, Commissioner, Town of Davidson

Barbara Maurer, Town Council, Town of River Bend

Darcey Ladner, Council Member, Town of Weddington

Dick Casey, Council Member, Village of Sugar Mountain

Mason Blake, Mayor Pro Tem, Montreat

Michele Wood, Council Member, Weaverville

Jean R. Toner, Mayor, Town of St. James

Hazel Thornton, Council Member, Woodfin

John Barrett, Mayor, Town of Waco

Doris Howington, Commissioner, Whitakers

Paul Henkel, Council Member, Town of Troutman

Tim Helms, Mayor, Montreat

Susan Cope, Commissioner and Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Stem

Bryan Cohn, City Commissioner, Oxford

John Foley, Town Commissioner, Pittsboro

Patti Secreast, Mayor Pro Tempore, Spencer