

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3705

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
ENVIRONMENT AND
PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

November 27, 2022

Roger G. Worthington, Esq.
President, Worthy Garden Club
495 Ne Bellevue Dr., OR 97701

Dear Roger,

Thank you for contacting me to share your support for protecting our nation's public lands and forests. I appreciate your advocacy on this important issue.

Old growth forests are a vital part of Oregon's ecosystem, providing habitats for endangered animals like the Northern Spotted Owl and other old growth-dependent species. One of my top priorities is working with Oregonians to develop ways to sustainably manage our natural resources, create more jobs in our forests, reduce the threat of wildfires, and respond to climate chaos.

On January 15, 2021, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) revised a 1995 standard that prohibited the harvest of 21-inch or larger diameter trees, and issued a new guideline to replace it. The new guideline emphasizes protection of old trees, meaning trees that are older than 150 years; if there are not enough old trees to develop late and old structure conditions, large trees are protected, favoring fire tolerant species where appropriate.


I firmly believe that responsible management of forests and public lands does not have to come at the expense of our old growth forests and sensitive habitats, nor should it undermine landmark environmental laws. That's why in August 2020, I joined my colleague Senator Wyden in sending a letter to USFS and requested an extended public comment period regarding the proposed Eastside Screens plan amendment, to ensure all voices are heard on this complex issue.

I have heard from some Oregonians that the revised guideline does not go far enough in protecting old-growth trees, and I have heard from others that this is a strong step forward in restoring forest health in fire prone forests. Please know that I am tracking this issue, and should legislation regarding the Eastside Screens amendment come before the Senate for consideration, I will keep your views in mind.

I strongly support public lands and will continue advocating for the integrity of our environmental laws and for the preservation of our forests and public lands. As a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, please know that I will continue fighting for policies that protect our environment and public health.

Thank you for your input on this issue. I hope you will continue to write me about the issues that matter most to you.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey A. Merkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct underline for the last name.

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

JM/ss