Dear Senators,

As you craft the legislation to address the emergency of wildfires in the age of Climate Crisis, I hope you will remember that we must look to the very newest science on climate and forests. I am heartbroken to see all the logging, including that of living trees, that is going on in our communities hard hit by wildfire. Whichever agency is looking the other way while this opportunistic and destructive logging is going on needs a thorough spring cleaning, with fresh clear minds brought in, and compromised old alliances put out.

My college aged daughter is looking into various youth forest service corps for summer work experience. She is an environmental science major, and I hope that the corps she serves is up to the task of addressing the intersecting needs of people and forests, animals and plants so that the experience is challenging and hope-infusing, not demoralizing.

I want her to be proud of our state's environmental heritage but the future is not looking bright to me. Our reaction to the megafires of the past few years has been rather reactionary. The practice of thinning forests not directly surrounding residential areas is outmoded and wasteful. Turning forests that have experienced fire into stripped land ready for timber plantations by heavily logging serves only to degrade water quality and land stability, endanger roads and hiking trails, and contribute massively to carbon emissions. Commercial backcountry logging has no place in wildfire restoration. It's ugly, inimical to state recreation and tourism, and harkens back to the bad old days when we thought we could take and take forever, with no thought to the needs of the greater environment of which we are a part. I know this is just part of the complex problem your committee is addressing. I hope you will put the needs of mature and old growth forests and their denizens high on your priority list. Their continued existence is tied up with ours.
Thank you for your serious study of this matter.
Sincerely,
Teresa Mueller