

### Public Availability of Comments

Written comments we receive become part of the administrative record associated with this action. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can request in your comment that we withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public disclosure in their entirety.

### Next Steps

If we decide to issue a permit to an applicant listed in this notice, we will publish a notice in the **Federal Register**.

### Authority

We publish this notice under section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

### Marilet A. Zablan,

*Regional Program Manager for Restoration and Endangered Species Classification, Pacific Region.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Office of the Secretary

[Docket No. **DO1–2022–0003**; **223D0102DM**, **DS6CS00000**, **DLSN00000.000000**, **DX.6CS25**]

### Request for Information To Inform Interagency Working Group on Mining Regulations, Laws, and Permitting

**AGENCY:** Department of the Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of public listening sessions and extension of public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Interior is announcing the dates of public listening sessions the Interagency Working Group on Mining Regulations, Laws, and Permitting is holding to gather information and develop recommendations for improving Federal hardrock mining regulations, laws, and permitting processes. We are also extending the comment period on our March 31, 2022, request for information notice announcing the formation of an

interagency working group to gather information and develop recommendations for improving Federal hardrock mining regulations, laws, and permitting processes.

**DATES:** The public comment period on our request for information notice that published on March 31, 2022, at 86 FR 18811 is extended. Interested persons are invited to submit comments by 11:59 p.m. August 30, 2022.

The interagency group will host virtual public listening sessions at the dates and times below.

- 12:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m. ET Tuesday, July 19th
- 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m. ET Thursday, July 21st
- 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m. ET Tuesday, July 26th

Please register at the following link to receive further communication regarding the details of the listening session, including an invite.

[https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_7aYgS\\_MQqPSTKR0B88n03A](https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_7aYgS_MQqPSTKR0B88n03A)

[https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_DECbIn4eQ\\_CwYEpEOM3lpQ](https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_DECbIn4eQ_CwYEpEOM3lpQ)

[https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_KUjEwhI-Q5qB2ZGYtBbMYA](https://blm.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_KUjEwhI-Q5qB2ZGYtBbMYA)

Listening sessions may end before the time noted above if all those participating have completed their oral comments.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be submitted through <https://www.regulations.gov> and will be available for public viewing and inspection. In the Search box, enter the docket number presented above in the document headings. For best results, do not copy and paste the number; instead, type the docket number into the Search box using hyphens. Then, click on the Search button. You may submit a comment by clicking on “Comment.” Comments may also be submitted by mail using the following address: Bureau of Land Management, Division of Solid Minerals, 1849 C Street NW, Room 5645, Washington, DC 20240.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Steven Feldgus, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, (202) 208–6734, or by email at [miningreform@ios.doi.gov](mailto:miningreform@ios.doi.gov). Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services for contacting Mr. Feldgus. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their

country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On February 24, 2021, President Biden signed Executive Order (E.O.) 14017, “America’s Supply Chains.” On June 8, 2021, the White House released the 100-Day reviews directed by E.O. 14017, which included a recommendation for the Federal government to establish “an interagency team with expertise in mine permitting and environmental law to identify gaps in statutes and regulations that may need to be updated to ensure new production meets strong environmental standards throughout the lifecycle of the project; ensure meaningful community consultation and consultation with tribal nations, respecting the government-to-government relationship, at all stages of the mining process; and examine opportunities to reduce time, cost, and risk of permitting without compromising these strong environmental and consultation benchmarks.”<sup>1</sup>

On September 16, 2021, the Department of the Interior (Department) received a petition for rulemaking pursuant to the Department’s regulations at 43 CFR part 14 from 9 Tribal and 31 conservation groups requesting “a rulemaking to strengthen and modernize [the Bureau of Land Management’s] regulations at 43 CFR part 3800 *et seq.*”

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA); section 40206 of the IIJA, “Critical Minerals Supply Chains and Reliability,” directs the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to submit a report to Congress by November 15, 2022, that “identifies additional measures, including regulatory and legislative proposals, if appropriate, that would increase the timeliness of permitting activities for the exploration and development of domestic critical minerals.”

To respond to these directives and the rulemaking petition, the Department has created an interagency working group (IWG) on Federal hardrock mining laws, regulations, and permitting, chaired by the Department and including the Department of Agriculture through the U.S. Forest Service; the Environmental

<sup>1</sup> The White House, *Building Resilient Supply Chains, Revitalizing American Manufacturing, and Fostering Broad-Based Growth*, June 2021, p. 14. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/08/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-supply-chain-disruptions-task-force-to-address-short-term-supply-chain-discontinuities/>.

Protection Agency; the Army Corps of Engineers; the Departments of Commerce, Energy, Defense, and State; the Council on Environmental Quality; and the National Economic Council. For the purposes of the IWG, “hardrock” minerals are those mineral resources that are subject to disposal under the Mining Law of 1872.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Tommy Beaudreau,**

*Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

#### Request for Information (RFI) on Federal Old-growth and Mature Forests

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, Agriculture (USDA); Bureau of Land Management, Interior (DOI).

**ACTION:** Request for information.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), United States Forest Service (Forest Service), and the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), invite public comment to inform the response to Executive Order Strengthening the Nation’s Forests, Communities, and Local Economies which requires USDA and DOI to define old-growth and mature forests on Federal lands; complete an inventory and make it publicly available; coordinate conservation and wildfire risk reduction activities; identify threats to mature and old-growth forests; develop policies to address threats; develop Agency-specific reforestation goals by 2030; develop climate-informed reforestation plans; and develop recommendations for community-led local and regional economic development opportunities.

**DATES:** A webinar will be held for interested members of the public on July

21, 2022. More information about this session (including specific time and how to attend) will be posted to the Forest Service website (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/old-growth-forests>). Comments must be received in writing by August 15, 2022.

**ADDRESSES:** The webinar will be held on Microsoft Teams web conferencing software. The webinar will be recorded. Information about how to attend the webinar, presentation materials used during the webinar, and the webinar recording will be posted to: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/old-growth-forests>. Written comments concerning this notice may be submitted electronically to: <https://cara.fs.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?project=NP-3239>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jamie Barbour, Assistant Director, Ecosystem Management Coordination, (503) 708–9138, [roy.barbour@usda.gov](mailto:roy.barbour@usda.gov). Individuals who use telecommunication devices for the deaf and hard of hearing (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339, 24 hours a day, every day of the year, including holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of this RFI is to inform the public and gather feedback on potential future implementation efforts associated with provisions of Executive Order (E.O.) 14072: Strengthening the Nation’s Forests, Communities, and Local Economies, issued April 22, 2022. The focus of this current request for information is to inform the response to E.O. 14072 Section 2(b) specifically, which calls on the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, within one year, to define, identify, and complete an inventory of old-growth and mature forests on Federal lands, accounting for regional and ecological variations, as appropriate, and making the inventory publicly available.

*Background.* E.O. 14072 Section 2(b) states that: “The Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands, shall, within one year of the date of this order, define, identify, and complete an inventory of old-growth and mature forests on Federal lands, accounting for regional and ecological variations, as appropriate, and shall make such inventory publicly available.”

USDA and DOI recognize definition development as a pivotal first step in meeting the subsequent identification and inventory requirements of E.O. 14072. Development of the definition,

followed by identification and inventory will then be used to inform subsequent needs identified in E.O. 14072 Section 2(c) (e.g., conservation and wildfire risk reduction activities, including consideration of climate-smart stewardship of mature and old-growth forests; analysis of the threats to mature and old-growth forests on Federal lands, including from wildfires and climate change; and development of policies to institutionalize climate-smart management and conservation strategies that address threats to mature and old-growth forests on Federal land).

This effort is also directly connected to the Secretary’s Memorandum 1077–004: Climate Resilience and Carbon Stewardship of America’s National Forests and Grasslands (issued June 23, 2022, by the Secretary of Agriculture, <https://www.usda.gov/directives/sm-1077-004>). The Secretary’s Memorandum 1077–004 specifically references E.O. 14072 implementation and other actions.

Defining old growth and mature forests for purposes of conducting an inventory as required under E.O. 14072 Section 2(b) does not, by itself, change any current forest management policies or practices. Developing policies to institutionalize climate-smart management and conservation strategies that address threats to mature and old-growth forests on Federal land as stated in E.O. 14072 Section 2(c) will follow completion of definition development, identification, and inventory.

Defining old-growth and mature forests has evolved with our scientific understanding of these unique ecosystems. Previous definitions include a general old-growth one included in a 1989, Forest Service Chief’s letter to Regional Foresters which reads: “Old-growth forests are ecosystems distinguished by old trees and related structural attributes. Old-growth encompasses the later stages of stand development that typically differ from earlier stages in a variety of characteristics, which may include tree size, accumulations of large dead woody material, number of canopy layers, species composition, and ecosystem function.” Today, most scientists agree that old-growth forests differ widely in character with age, geographic location, climate, site productivity, and characteristic disturbance regime. Mature and old-growth forests also reflect diverse spiritual and cultural values for these special places.

Gathering and synthesizing old-growth forest information at a national scale continues to progress. Data sources exist, including the Forest Service Inventory and Analysis Program. Yet,