



BLM National NEPA Register

Comment Submission

**Project: DOI-BLM-WO-WO2100-2020-0001-OTHER_NEPA - BLM Proposed Administrative
Categorical Exclusions**

Document: 20200601_BLM Timber Salvage Verif Rprt.pdf

Submission ID: SLVCX-1-500106962

Comment

Dear Secretary Bernhardt and Acting Director Pendley:

On behalf of the 76 undersigned organizations and individuals, we are pleased to provide the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with the attached comments on the agency's proposed categorical exclusion for salvage

logging. Our organizations collectively represent decades of experience with the BLM's implementation of NEPA, categorical exclusions (CXs), and timber harvest, particularly salvage logging (and especially post-fire salvage logging). Our organizations and members would be adversely affected by this proposal, which further threatens imperiled species and the ecological integrity of the places we advocate for and help to steward.

We have extensive expertise regarding the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA regulations, the BLM's NEPA regulations and procedures, and the body of federal case law interpreting the agency's legal obligations under NEPA. Our experience in agency decision-making processes, collaborative efforts, and as plaintiffs in NEPA litigation lends us unique insight into the BLM's proposed CX.

In addition to our collective experience with BLM's land management practices and NEPA, we draw your attention to a letter in opposition from 192 scientific experts in forest ecology, biology, disturbance ecology, aquatics, and other disciplines regarding BLM's proposed CX. Those experts explain that

"It is widely acknowledged in the scientific community that the impacts of salvage logging and the associated timber yarding and road construction (temporary and permanent) are pervasive and cumulatively negative. Research regarding salvage logging in other types of recently disturbed forest, such as through insects, disease, windthrow, or drought, comes to similar conclusions."

Given the scientific consensus that post-disturbance logging has significant adversely environmental consequences, these experts concluded that "because the BLM's proposal does not comport with the best available science, we urge the BLM to abandon its rulemaking effort." We join these experts in calling for the BLM to abandon this ill-advised and unsupported rulemaking.

The proposed CX appears to be in service of the present administration's deregulatory agenda that serves to elevate the interests of extractive industries above the interests of the public. This CX must be considered along with other proposed changes to the CEQ and Forest Service NEPA rules that will also negatively affect the ecosystem and imperiled species. This agenda is particularly inappropriate on the public lands managed by the BLM, which are owned in common by all Americans, not just a privileged few.

Because the BLM has failed to prepare a sufficient administrative record to support its proposed CX, we anticipate that the CX – should it be finalized – will be subject to judicial review. The agency should abandon this rulemaking effort and focus on immediate needs such as science-based restoration, monitoring, and partnership efforts.

With regards on behalf of the undersigned organizations and individuals,

/s/ Susan Jane M. Brown, Wildlands Program Director & Staff Attorney
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SEE ATTACHED/UPLOADED COMMENTS AND EXHIBITS A - C

Upload File(s)

Files

- BLM Salvage CE Rulemaking Comments - FINAL.pdf
- Exhibit C - 192 Scientists Letter.pdf
- Exhibit A - Road Ecology Literature Review - FINAL.pdf

Files

Exhibit B - DDS Critique - FINAL FULL.pdf

Submitter(s)

Submitter 1

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(Add me to the project mailing list) - YES

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(Withhold my personally identifying information from future publications on this project) - **NO**