

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 12, 2020

Vicki Christiansen  
Chief, United States Forest Service  
United States Department of Agriculture  
201 14th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20227

Dear Ms. Christiansen,

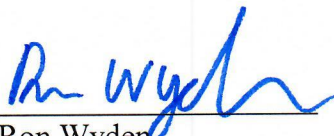
We are writing to request the United States Forest Service extend to 90-days the public comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed 21-Inch Wildlife Standard of the Eastside Screens (Eastside Screens) plan amendment.

The Forest Service recently released the draft EA for the Eastside Screens plan amendment, which will affect nearly 10 million acres of public land throughout Eastern Oregon and includes six national forests. The plan amendment proposes significant changes to permit the harvest of larger diameter trees east of the Cascade Crest. As with almost all federal land management decisions, these proposed changes are not without a certain amount of controversy.

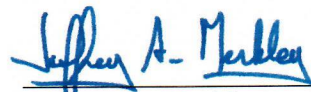
Given the scale of the Eastside Screens plan amendment, the extent of the affected area, as well as the effect of this decision on local communities, economies, and the environment, we have heard concerns that a 30-day public comment period is insufficient, especially during a pandemic, for parties to deliberate and make comments. Additionally, given the U.S. Forest Service's decision to proceed with an Environmental Assessment, rather than an Environmental Impact Statement, on a federal action of this magnitude and complexity, a 90-day public comment period is not an unreasonable request.

Therefore, we request a 60-day extension, which will bring the full public comment period to a total of 90-days. We thank you for your consideration, and request a prompt response to our request.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator