October 13, 2006

Honorable Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture
Room 200A
Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Honorable Dale Bosworth
Chief of the Forest Service
Suite 4 NW
Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

We are writing to criticize the continuing logging operations being conducted by the Forest Service in the Giant Sequoia National Monument (GSNM). The GSNM was created by presidential proclamation in April 2000 with the express purposes of ending logging and preserving the unique natural sequoia ecosystems in the area.

Using blatantly transparent excuses, such as non-existent “hazard-tree” threats, or supposed fire-reduction logging of giant, fire-resistant, centuries-old trees, the Forest Service has been conducting major logging operations in the GSNM. These logging operations are destroying the natural sequoia forest ecosystem of the GSNM, in direct violation of the spirit and the letter of the presidential proclamation creating the GSNM in 2000.

The Forest Service is clearly conducting these logging operations in the GSNM for the commercial gain of a small number of private logging interests, destroying the ecological values of the GSNM and the natural assets of the American people, and violating the public trust.

Further, the United States District Court for the Northern District of California, in response to a lawsuit brought by the Attorney General of California, found the Forest Service fire plan for the Giant Sequoia National Monument to be illegal, and the Forest Service withdrew it. This illegal fire plan is the basis of much of the logging that has occurred and the logging specified by the GSNM management plan.

Following is a short selection of instances of Forest Service violations of federal laws and regulations.

- Failing to consider or to properly evaluate new information and the impacts to the environment by arbitrarily extending the contract expiration date for the Burton Thinning Timber Sale, so 3.6 million board feet of trees could be removed from the Monument;
• Exempting a hazard tree removal project that removed more than 200 large trees from the *Trail of 100 Giants*, a high-profile showcase for giant sequoias, then arbitrarily including so-called “fuel reduction” activities that removed perhaps thousands of young trees in that project area without the National Environmental Policy Act requirements (“Reducing surface fuels” does not fall under the same category as “removal of hazard trees.”);

• Failing to follow the Forest Service’s own *Giant Sequoia National Monument Management Plan*, which requires that a ‘no tree removal’ alternative be studied and documented prior to determining that tree removal is the only feasible option;

• Ignoring the protective measures of the 1990 Mediated Settlement Agreement (MSA), which requires that inventories and scientific studies precede any significant entry into a sequoia grove;

• Failing to provide a legal Fire and Fuels Management Plan, as mandated by the 1988 Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for Sequoia National Forest.

Chief of the Forest Service Dale Bosworth, in Congressional testimony before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee on March 9, 2006, gave incorrect answers about logging along the Trail of 100 Giants in the GSNM, in an attempt to justify the logging there. That logging has severely degraded the natural experience of persons visiting the Trail, which is a natural treasure – the very place where the Monument was proclaimed in April, 2000.

We therefore demand that the Forest Service comply with the intentions and the legal requirements of the GSNM proclamation, and that the Forest Service abide by the other environmental laws which govern the GSNM’s management. Moreover, we demand an end to logging operations in the GSNM.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Carolyn Y. Maxey
H. D. Ogletree

[Signatures]

Joe Bliss
James Hyneman

[Signature]

Michael [Signature]
Pete Stark
Carolyn Maloney
Lloyd Doggett
James McGovern
Jim McDermott
Tammy Baldwin
John Olver
Michael Honda
Dennis Kucinich
Chris Van Hollen

Jane Harman
Anna Eshoo
Patrick Kennedy
Janice Schakowsky
Betty McCollum
Grace Napolitano
Barbara Lee
John Lewis
Edward Markey
Jim Moran

Marty Meehan

Maurice Hinchey

Shelia Jackson Lee

Alcee Hastings

Richard Neal

Tom Lantos

John Conyers

Albert Wynn

Barney Frank