



FORESTS FOREVER

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Four things the governor should do for California's forests

In his speech in San Francisco yesterday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger outlined his ideas on fighting global warming.

"It is encouraging that the governor is addressing the issue at all, and his proposals were good as far as they went," said Paul Hughes, executive director of Forests Forever.

"But a strongly related aspect of California's environment is forest protection, and unfortunately he continues to neglect it. In his campaign, and many times since, Gov. Schwarzenegger promised to protect the forests of California; yet so far he has done little to bring this about."

Here are four things the governor could do to live up to his promises:

- **Improve the state's forestry laws by proposing a ban on clearcutting and on logging old-growth forests.** Right now, old-growth trees are not well protected, and clearcutting (or "even-aged management") is still used in logging projects on state and private forest lands. A state-wide ban on the practice would go a long way toward keeping our forests, wildlife and watersheds truly healthy.

- **Appoint more environmentally conscious members to the California Board of Forestry.** The board has nine seats, five of which are supposed to be reserved for members of the "general public." (Three go to the timber industry; another goes to ranching interests.)

If the governor wants to show that he means to protect the state's forests, he should withdraw his nomination last July of Ron Nehring to a seat on the board.

Nehring is a former consultant to Americans for Tax Reform, the far-right group founded by anti-tax activist Grover Norquist. He also worked for the National Center for Public Policy Research, a conservative think tank that, among other causes, argues against taking action to stop global warming and against preserving roadless forests. A dyed-in-the-wool partisan political operative with no relevant experience, Nehring is not credible as a representative of the "general public."

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- **Use his influence with the state Board of Forestry to improve the newly proposed management plan for Jackson Forest.** Clearcutting is still called for in this plan, and intensive logging would take place on a third of the forest. Several alternatives have been proposed that would greatly improve the plan; the governor should see that one of them is adopted.

- **Use the influence of the governor's office to keep California's wild forests roadless.** Schwarzenegger should follow the example of governors such as Oregon's Ted Kulongoski and Washington's Christine Gregoire and support litigation that would restore the original Clinton-era roadless rule. One of the most popular environmental regulations ever, the rule protected roadless areas in California and across the country from development.

The governor has promised to work with the Forest Service as management plans for the national forests in the state are rewritten. But the recently released plans for four Southern California forests—Angeles, Cleveland, Inyo, and Los Padres— would open up roadless areas to off-road vehicles, energy development, and more. The governor should challenge these plans, and let the Forest Service know that he intends to ensure roadless protections in every California forest.

“The state's forests are worth far more for hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and as watersheds, carbon sinks and wildlife refuges, than they would be as stumpfields and monocultured plantations,” said Hughes.

“By promoting the health and welfare of California's forests, the governor will keep his promises to the voters— and since forests help to scrub carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, he would be contributing something to his fight against global warming as well.”