Dear Columbia River Gorge Commission,

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Please make the following changes to the draft Climate Change Chapter:

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To protect habitat for threatened and endangered trout and salmon populations within the National Scenic Area and to adapt to increased stream temperatures and changes to seasonal flows resulting from climate change, increase protective stream buffers to a minimum of 200 feet in Guideline 2.B.,
Priority Habitat and Sensitive Wildlife Protection, Page 124:
To better protect at risk species in the Gorge, such as the American Pika, prohibit adverse effects to all Priority Habitats. For example, prohibit mining, logging and development within all suitable habitat for the Pika, especially talus slopes.

Thank you considering these comments and please make them part of the official record.

Regards,
Dorethea Simone
2828 NE Everett St
Camas, WA 98607
Dear Columbia River Gorge Commission,

Having lived in Oregon for more than thirty years, the Columbia Gorge holds a treasured place in our family memories as well as in the history and ecology of the Pacific Northwest. As Commission members, I know you share a deep love for the richness and significance of the Gorge.

At this point in history, climate change poses the greatest far-reaching danger facing the Columbia Gorge and its interconnected watersheds and landscapes. I appreciate your recent “Climate Change” chapter in the Management Plan and proposal to develop a climate action plan, but specific, well-developed climate adaptation and mitigation policies must be included, as they are vital to fulfilling the the National Scenic Area Act's mandates and to protect fish, wildlife, sensitive plants, and human health in the Gorge.

I urge you to revise the draft Climate Change Chapter to include the following points:

Policy 1. Page 380:
Add a target for completion of the Climate Change Action Plan within one year of the adoption of the revised Management Plan.

Streams and riparian areas. Page 380:
Require a 200-foot protective buffer on each side of ALL fish-bearing streams in the NSA, particularly all streams providing habitat for salmon, pending completion of the Climate Change Action Plan. Link this requirement to the Natural Resources Chapter of the Management Plan, Guideline 2.B., Page 117. This standard has been applied for nearly 30 years in the Special Management Areas (SMAs) and now must be applied to streams within the General Management Area (GMA) of the Gorge. Upon completion of the Climate Change Action Plan, review the 200-foot buffer requirement based on the best available science and improve the buffer protections if necessary.

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In addition to stream buffers, expanded protections for the Columbia River, wetlands, ponds, lakes and wildlife habitat must be made a priority. Prohibit the loss or destruction of wetlands. Improve pond and lake buffers to protect endangered Western Pond Turtle nesting and rearing habitat. Improve policies to protect unique low elevation habitat for the American Pika from disturbances caused by mining, logging and development. Link these policies to the Natural Resource Chapter of the Management Plan.

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To improve carbon sequestration to mitigate the impacts of climate change, prevent the conversion of forest lands to residential and agricultural uses. If agricultural conversions are allowed, require full mitigation for the loss of forest land. Change “should” to “shall” regarding full mitigation for the loss of forest land. Revise Part II, Chapter 2 of the Management Plan to incorporate these changes.

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Add a new policy that prioritizes limits on the development and transportation of fossil fuels, prohibiting new or expanded fossil fuel infrastructure development, including pipelines to transport oil or fracked gas.

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Regarding the existing urban area boundaries in the 13 towns within the Columbia River Gorge: I strongly support new policies to limit urban sprawl by requiring a regional analysis of the development potential in all existing urban areas, and by defining “minor revision” to be up to 20 acres or 1% of the land area of the urban area, whichever is less. This policy must be cumulative over time.

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Thank you for considering these comments and including them in the official record.

Regards,
Betsy Toll
3841 SE 51st Ave
Portland, OR 97206
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Thank you considering these comments and please make them part of the official record.

Regards,
Caitlin Muret
9566 NE Dorchester Way
Hillsboro, OR 97124
Dear Columbia River Gorge Commission,

I add my name to the hundreds of others who are requesting that the Commission commit to concrete actions and timelines to protect the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area from the damaging effects, already apparent, of climate change, urban sprawl, and transportation of fossil fuel.

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Regards,
Meg Larson
2907 NE 11th Ave
Portland, OR 97212
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Regards,
Geoffrey Carr
3435 NE 20th Ave
Portland, OR 97212