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1/20/2022

Re: SB 5633 "Keep Washington Evergreen" Ag, Water, Natural Resources & Parks

Chairman Van De Wege & members of the Committee:

I'm Ken Miller, a small family forest owner representing myself and the Washington Farm Forestry Association testifying in support of the intent, tone, & guiding framework within SB 5633 to help keep Washington evergreen. I'm particularly eager to help work out some conversion avoidance strategies that genuinely respect private ownership, including the right to manage all my property using Best Available Science that simultaneously protects/enhances multiple public & critter benefits. Simply keeping more forestland forested achieves the most total public and critter benefits!!! Ever more micro-regulating of a dwindling land base seems to sink all boats.

Our WFFA Motto is to be good: **Stewards of the Land for Generations to Come**. To realize the goals of this bill we must better recognize the social & economic drivers of land conversion, including:

- **Financial advantages of conversion** are almost always going to trump working the land, especially for those of us in/near the urban interface as our population continues to increase. Eco-Services income will help with some expenses but many simply can't forego that much income disparity. I'm eager to work the potential of a robust Transfer of Development Right option to resolve these value conflicts.
- **Threats of regulatory takings** on rural land uses feels constant, unfair, & is a huge incentive to convert sooner, not later! These increased regulatory pressures to advantage another constituency or goal are often not respectful of landowner needs, nor supported by robust scientific justification.
- **Respect & Appreciation** for the current generations that have/are keeping forestland forested feels missing. Having to fight the bureaucracy for so long trying to achieve the promises of 1999 Forests & Fish certainly doesn't encourage the next generation to continue our passion in the face of such headwinds. Likewise an ill-informed (but well-intentioned) public negatively affects our "social license" & desire to farm. Farming, particularly small family forestry isn't mostly about the money. If we don't feel respected and appreciated for our stewardship (by the bureaucracy & public) we or the future generations will increasingly simply forego all the hard work and social stigma (harvesting every 40-50 years) in favor of the greater financial rewards of conversion. Continuing a relatively low margin activity requires a higher purpose to be sustainable over generations!

This bill seems to address the major drivers of conversion – at this point it feels like a long sought, much appreciated paradigm shift in the way rural folks are treated by an ever more disconnected majority. If called upon for public testimony I'll share my personal story/example (attached) relating to the above comments.

Very sincerely,

Ken Miller  
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# Our 108 acres between Scott Lake, a Residential Community, & Millersylvania State Park

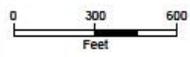
Miller\_Map4



**Legend**

- Parcel Boundaries
- Roads - Major
  - Major Roads
  - Ramp
  - 15; US 101
- Roads (Large Scale)
- Railroads
- County Border

Scale 1:7,044



Map Created Using GeoData Public Website  
Published: 12/3/2020

Note:



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**One small example of many potential negative impacts of development. During a recent small harvest on newly acquired parcels we found these old tires that had been dumped (& buried) from the neighboring development 50-60 years ago. Leaving them buried made economic sense – but not good for fish or land.**

**Forestry is the best long term land use for the environment, fish, critters, and people! Avoiding conversion is a worthy goal - achievable if voluntary & win/win as envisioned by this bill.**

