



P.O. Box 1010  
Chehalis, WA 98532  
Phone (360) 388-7074  
info@wafarmforestry.com  
www.wafarmforestry.com

Chairman Van de Wege and members of the committee, I am Elaine Oneil, Executive Director of the Washington Farm Forestry Association – representing small forest landowners.

**Targeted lands:** In 2019 this committee advanced SB 5330 which funded the University of Washington to analyze the impacts of regulation on small forest landowners. They found that forest conversion – which is, **by definition, the permanent conversion of forest land to other uses, not its occasional harvest** – mostly occurs on lands owned by small forest landowners. The bill in front of you today is responsive to that element of the UW report. It recognizes that conversion is an issue and proposes that we develop a plan to address it. We are pleased that it focuses on incentives – the carrots - as opposed to the stick of regulation. That is because most of my community can't afford to surrender asset value 'for a good cause', nor should they be required to do so if they are identified as a critical forest for retention as proposed in this bill.

**Climate Resilience:** Keeping forests as forests contributes to climate mitigation. That is because wood is about 50% carbon, and that carbon comes from the atmosphere. But not all forests are equally good at climate mitigation. I'll give you an example - I did a timber harvest last year – on a property acquired after the last owner harvested but didn't reforest properly. It was a rehab – 7MBF/acre of poor quality trees instead of the 30-35 MBF/acre one would expect from similar managed sites. That was 4-5x less wood going to mills to support our economy, 4-5x less carbon removed from the atmosphere, and 4-5x less income back to the landowner. A plethora of federally funded research shows that forest management matters – and to the extent that we can raise the profile of the benefits of small scale working forests, and the more we can use incentive opportunities to get landowners jazzed about owning forest land, and managing it, the better the outcome for the economy and the environment.

**Keeping forests as forests needs an integrated approach.** Forest management – whether it is fixing a bridge, planting, or harvesting require local infrastructure (think skilled tradespeople, equipment, mills, trucking). This bill makes explicit this connection between keeping forests as forests and a strong sector. That's because my community takes advantage of the forestry infrastructure that simply would not exist without the demand from the rest of the sector. It becomes a self-sustaining circle of demand and supply. That also applies to the forests. USFS data show that in every US region with a strong forest sector, there are more forests - and more carbon dense forests – than in regions without this demand. **In other words, Washington is evergreen because we harvest, not because we don't.**