

Weekly Legislative Update: **Forests**

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Bills Needing Action This Week

Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so **please leave the “Organization” box blank**. A more powerful influence is **many voices speaking for themselves** rather than many voices speaking for the League.

The following bills are on “Watch” status:

You can email your opinion on these bills. At this [link](#) select the representative, then under their photo, select **email**, and fill out the form with your message. Include in the subject the number and name of the bill.

HB 1895 (the “Keep WA Evergreen Act”) Developing a plan for conservation, reforestation, and restoration of forests in Washington state.

⚠ Scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources on 1/18 at 10:00 AM. Various organizations within the State are concerned about emphasis on “working forests” rather than natural forests in this bill. ***If your representative serves on the House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee ask them to engage with organizations like Front & Centered to understand their perspective.*** (This includes Representatives: Shewmake, Chandler, Dent, Fitzgibbon, Klicker, Kloba, Ramos, Schmick, Springer.)

SB 5633 (the “Keep WA Evergreen Act”) Planning for the prevention of permanent loss of forests in Washington State.

⚠ Scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks on 1/20 at 1:30 PM. ***If your representative serves on the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee ask them to engage with organizations like Front & Centered to understand their perspective.*** (This includes Representatives: Van De Wege, Salomon, Warnick, Honeyford, Rolfes, Short, Stanford.)

⚠ Top scientists are urgently calling for protection of **natural forests** for their ability to sequester carbon dioxide, as well as address the biodiversity crisis. Please read the [letter](#) signed by 200 independent scientists from June 2020, documenting their concerns about climate and biodiversity impacts of logging.

Sign in “Pro” for the following bills this week:

You may express support for bills in hearings with the [online process](#). Select House or Senate then the committee and the date and time of the meeting, then follow the menus. Detailed instructions are in this week’s Legislative Newsletter.

[HB 1661](#) (DNR Request). Conserving and restoring kelp forests and eelgrass meadows in Washington state.

⚠ Scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources on 1/18 at 10:00 AM. Please sign in Pro at: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=House&mId=29497&ald=144000&caId=18838&tId=3>

[SB 5619](#) (DNR Request). Conserving and restoring kelp forests and eelgrass meadows in Washington state.

⚠ Scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks on 1/20 at 1:30 PM. Please sign in Pro at: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=Senate&mId=29513&ald=144051&caId=18700&tId=3>

[SB 5637](#) Increasing forest practices fees to pay for program implementation costs and a new online system for forest practices review.

⚠ Scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks on 1/18 at 1:30 PM. Please sign in Pro at: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=Senate&mId=29512&ald=144048&caId=18654&tId=3>

Bills We Support

[HJR 4209](#) Amends the state Constitution to provide that the people of the state have the right to a clean and healthy environment, that the state shall serve as trustee of the natural resources of the state, and that the state shall equitably protect these rights for all people. The rights stated in this section are inherent, inalienable, and indefeasible, are among those rights reserved to all the people, and are on par with other protected inalienable rights.

[SB 5637](#) Increasing forest practices fees to pay for program implementation costs and a new online system for forest practices review. The Department of Natural Resources manages an information system that allows for public review of proposed forest practices and that the system is in need of an upgrade and maintenance. It is the intent of the legislature to have landowners who submit forest applications and notifications to share in covering the cost of the upgrade, as well as provide revenue to support the ongoing maintenance of the new forest practices online review system through increased fees.

[SJR 8210](#) Amends the state Constitution to provide that the people of the state have the right to a clean and healthy environment, that the state shall serve as trustee of the natural resources of the state, and that the state shall equitably protect these rights for all people. The rights stated in this section are inherent, inalienable, and inalienable, are among those rights reserved to all the people, and are on par with other protected inalienable rights.

Bills We Are Watching

[HB 1103](#) Buy Clean Buy Fair. Improving environmental and social outcomes with the production of building materials. Requires firms selected for large construction or building renovation contracts to provide an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) and labor data for at least 90 percent of the weight of covered materials used in the project (primary reporting requirements).

[HB 1895/SB 5633](#) Keep Washington Evergreen. Aims to conserve at least one million acres of working forests, and reforest at least one million acres, including in burn scared and urban communities with disproportionately small amounts of tree cover, by 2040. This legislation calls for environmental and economic analyses to determine our highest value forests, and establishes an advisory council to develop a plan to reach the goals of the initiative.

Bills We Oppose

[SB 5721](#) Consolidating management of natural resources under the Commissioner of Public Lands by having the commissioner appoint the directors of the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the State Parks and Recreation Commission would create an efficient decision-making structure and provide for public accountability. The legislature further finds that having the Commissioner of Public Lands appoint the members of the Fish and Wildlife advisory commission and the State Parks and Recreation advisory committee and having the commission and committee serve in an advisory role to the directors of the relevant agencies would maintain strong public input into natural resource management issues while establishing a centralized and accountable structure for securing, managing, and enhancing the state's natural resources.

How You Can Be Involved

- During the legislative session we will send Action Alerts in the [Legislative Newsletter](#). Please respond to these, which will direct you to an application to facilitate communicating with your legislators on an important vote in committees or on the chamber floor.
- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have environmental teams to take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.

- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Sherri Dysart, Forests Issue Chair, sdysart@lwwva.org.