

Resolution Supporting Permanent Protection of Primary Forests

WHEREAS primary forests are forests that have never been logged, never been planted, or otherwise support natural ecological processes free from human interventions and impacts.¹

WHEREAS multiple global agreements such as the Glasgow Leaders Declaration on Forests and Land Use² and the Kunming – Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework³ call on nations to protect remaining primary forests as an essential strategy for halting and reversing biodiversity loss and climate change.

WHEREAS in Washington State, primary forests take the form of mature and old growth forests on federal lands and naturally regenerated, structurally complex older forest on lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Washington State Parks, also known as ‘legacy’ forests.

WHEREAS legacy forests on DNR lands are being liquidated by logging at a rapid rate⁴ despite their extreme rarity – representing just 0.2 – 3.2% of the landscape within the Columbia, North Puget Sound, South Coast, South Puget Sound and Straits Habitat Conservation Planning Units.⁵

WHEREAS permanent protection of legacy forests will stem the loss of habitat for hundreds of species that need complex older forests to survive, avoid significant greenhouse gas emissions, and help protect the land from wildfires, floods, droughts, landslides, invasive species, heat waves and other adverse impacts from climate change.⁶

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we call on Washington state legislators to pass legislation that (a) protects all remaining legacy forests on state forestlands from logging,

¹ <https://primaryforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Fact-sheet-1-Primary-Forests-An-Introduction.pdf>.

² <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20230418175226/https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/>.

³ <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf>.

⁴ <https://www.wlfcd.org/post/dnr-resumes-plans-to-log-29-000-acres-of-legacy-forests-in-wa>.

⁵ See, e.g. Oh Well Timber Sale Environmental Checklist at page 11: https://dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2026-03/amp_sepa_ol_ts_ohwellnew_check.pdf.

⁶ See summary of peer reviewed research on pages 5 – 8: <https://irp.cdn-website.com/0358d1eb/files/uploaded/Wishbone%20SEPA%20comments%205-3.pdf>.

roadbuilding, or other adverse modifications; (b) directs DNR to use the state environmental policy act (SEPA) process to require project applicants to study, develop, and propose alternatives⁷ to logging of legacy forests on private forestlands, including the alternative of aggregating parcels with other affected landowners into forest carbon projects, and (c) directs DNR to use its Good Neighbor Authority⁸ and Federal Lands Program to oppose and seek alternatives to logging legacy forests on federal lands.

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Organizational endorsements

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Please send requests to be added to info@sustainable-economy.org, with “Endorsing Primary Forest Protection Act” in subject line. Please provide organizational name, address, phone, website and point of contact.

⁷ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=43.21C.030>. See paragraph ‘e.’

⁸ <https://dnr.wa.gov/forest-resilience-division/federal-lands-program>.