

Weekly Legislative Update: **Forests**

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Bills Needing Action This Week

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

You may express support for bills in hearings with the online process. 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.

Please see the **Action Alert on the first page of the Legislative Newsletter**. The Action Alert concerns **HB 1789 Expanding revenue generation and economic opportunities from natural climate solutions and ecosystem services**. This is an opportunity to leverage the power of our mature, structurally complex forests to provide a revenue stream through the carbon offset markets.

Updates—New Bills

HB 1578/SB 5611 Improving community preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience to wildland fire health and safety impacts in areas of increasing population density, including in the wildland urban interface. These bills intend to improve community preparedness and resilience, while mitigating wildland fire health and safety impacts in the urban/wildland interface. The League is supporting these bills.

- HB 1578 is scheduled for executive session on 2/14 at 10:30 AM in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

HB 1720 Concerning the protection and restoration of riparian areas through the establishment of a fully voluntary, regionally focused riparian grant program designed to improve the ecological functions of critical riparian management zones. This bill replaces HB 1215. The League is supporting this bill.

- HB 1720 is scheduled for executive session on 2/17 at 10:30 AM in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

HB 1789 Expanding revenue generation and economic opportunities from natural climate solutions and ecosystem services. This bill is related to SB 5688. The League is supporting this bill.

- HB 1789 is scheduled for a public hearing on 2/14 at 10:30 AM in House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

[SB 5688](#) Providing carbon sequestration and ecosystem services in the management of public lands. This bill was made at the request of the Department of Natural Resources. The prime sponsor is Senator Lovelett. The intent of this bill to provide the Department of Natural Resources with specific authority, procedures, and criteria for development and implementation of carbon storage projects and associated ecosystem services. This bill would codify a new way for revenue to be generated from land and waters in the state, i.e. through the carbon offset markets. This bill had a public hearing on February 10 at 8:00 AM in the Environment, Energy & Technology committee. The League is supporting this bill.

- SB 5688 is scheduled for Executive Session on 2/17 at 8:00 AM in Senate Environment, Energy and Technology Committee.

Email your Legislators to Support These Bills

Use the link to email to any/all of your legislators, letting them know these bills are important to their constituents. HB (“House Bill”) to Representatives, SB (“Senate Bill”) to your Senator.

Bills that are related to Forest issues will normally be heard by:

- [House Agriculture and Natural Resources committee](#)
- [Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee](#)

You have the power to advocate for forests! Your elected officials are supposed to represent you. If your elected official is on one these committees, please use your power as a constituent to advocate for forest protection, and forest management aligned with the best available science.

Bills We Support

[HB 1032/SB 5039](#) Mitigating the risk of wildfires through electric utility planning and identification of best management practices appropriate to each electric utility's circumstances. LWVWA supported SB 5803-2022, but it was met with much resistance from the electric utilities. Senator Rolfes considered the concerns and introduced SB 5039. It now appears that the electric utilities are mostly in favor.

[HB 1720](#) Concerning the protection and restoration of riparian areas through the establishment of a fully voluntary, regionally focused riparian grant program designed to improve the ecological functions of critical riparian management zones. This bill replaces HB 1215.

[HB 1460/SB 5372](#) Concerning the Department of Natural Resources land transactions, revenue distributions, and creation and management of a trust land transfer program. These bills will help revitalize the Trust Land Transfer program. Here is a [fact sheet](#) about TLT. The Governor's budget included \$10.6 million for Trust Land Transfer – an insufficient, yet promising start to revitalizing TLT. Advocates for the TLT revitalization program will be asking the legislature for \$25 million for the 10 projects on the list. For more details about the program and list of the projects see DNR's [Trust Land Transfer-Land Portfolio Management Tool](#).

[HB 1578](#) / [SB 5611](#) Improving community preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience to wildland fire health and safety impacts in areas of increasing population density, including in the wildland urban interface. These bills intend to improve community preparedness and resilience, while mitigating wildland fire health and safety impacts in the urban/wildland interface.

[SB 5390](#) Establishing a programmatic safe harbor agreement on forestlands. This bill would facilitate participation in safe harbor agreements for spotted owl habit protection. These agreements would be voluntary, incentive-based and available to any nonfederal forestland owner. The Department of Natural Resources would consult with and rely on the Department of Fish and Wildlife for technical assistance (interagency agreement).

[SB 5688](#) Providing carbon sequestration and ecosystem services in the management of public lands. This bill was made at the request of the Department of Natural Resources. The intent of this bill to provide the Department of Natural Resources with specific authority, procedures, and criteria for development and implementation of carbon storage projects and associated ecosystem services. This bill would codify a new way for revenue to be generated from land and waters in the state, through the carbon offset markets.

Bills We Are Watching

[HB 1078](#) Concerning urban forest management ordinances. The intention of this bill was to initiate a robust discussion about how we will increase housing density in urban growth areas and not sacrifice the trees that mitigate heat, refresh the air and sequester carbon. The bill is a courageous call to begin thinking, talking and planning to solve another complex problem.

[HB 1689/SB 5636](#) Concerning forest practices in cities. These bills would give cities that plan under the growth management act the option to regulate forest practices within their own jurisdictions in alignment with standards established by the Department of Natural Resources.

How You Can Be Involved

- 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 into consideration as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Sherri Dysart, Forests Issue Chair, sdysart@lwvwa.org.
- [Pacific Northwest Forest Climate Alliance](#) is an organization dedicated to exploring the intersection of forest protection and climate justice. Many of the most renowned forest scientists are affiliated with this organization.