

Weekly Legislative Update: **Forests**

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January 23, 2023

Bills Needing Action This Week

Please read Bills We Support to see the latest status of other bills.

Sign in “Pro” for the following bill 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.

SB 5372 Trust Land Transfer Program

This bill will be heard on 1/26/23 at 1:30 PM in the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee.

Please sign in “PRO.” You must sign in by 12:30 PM on 1/26.

[Note: this was also an Action Alert on the front page of the Legislative Newsletter]

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 which had a hearing on Jan 11, 2023. HB 1032 (sponsored by Representative Dent) was heard on Jan 13. It now appears that the electric utilities are mostly in favor.

HB 1215/SB 5266 Concerning the protection and restoration of riparian areas. These bills were made by the request of the Governor. They are considered one of the **priority bills** for the Environmental Priorities Coalition ([EPC](#)). The LWVWA is a member of the EPC. In the 2022 session, Governor Inslee announced the Lorraine Loomis Act. The agriculture community was strongly opposed, and the bill did not pass out of the policy committee. Round table discussions were held over the past year to craft a bill that had more input from the agriculture community. A hearing on HB 1215 was held on 1/18 in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. There was much more positive response from the agriculture community. But, some deep concerns remain with the Tribes regarding the issue of voluntary participation in restoration/protection efforts. Many great minds are combing through the bill to improve language in order to improve outcomes (including passing the bill).

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](#).

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).

Bills We Are Watching

HB 1018/SB 5030 Changing the expiration date for the sales and use tax exemption of hog fuel to comply with the 2045 deadline for fossil fuel-free electrical generation in Washington state and to protect jobs with health care and retirement benefits in economically distressed communities.

The LWVWA testified at the HB1018 hearing on 1/10/23. The tax exemption for hog fuel is based on the concept of carbon neutrality. Recent research points to faulty carbon emissions

counting, which could possibly degrade our ability to achieve greenhouse gas emissions targets in the state.

- HB 1018 passed unanimously on 1/19.

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 1078 is scheduled for Executive Session on 1/25 in the Local Government Committee. We anticipate many amendments to the bill. Once those are evaluated, the League will reassess its position.

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.