

Weekly Legislative Update: **Forests**

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Updates

SB 5372 Trust Land Transfer Program- - Revitalization of TLT

This bill was heard on 1/26/23 at 1:30 PM in the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee. More than 500 people signed in “PRO” for this bill. **Thank you for taking time to make your voice heard in support of this bill.** You can watch all the testimony on TVW at this link.

[Jan 26, 2023 Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks at 1:30 PM](#)

Bills beyond the scope of the League

SB 5254 Concerning the leasing of state lands. The primary focus of the bill is the procedure the Department of Natural Resources follows to enter into leasing projects, especially carbon sequestration opportunities. The Washington Conservation Action (WCA) is opposing this bill. For two main reasons:

- This bill creates confusion because the Board of Natural Resources already has authority to create rules and approval processes for the leasing of state lands.
- It also diminishes existing authority by excluding agricultural and grazing leases from carbon sequestration opportunities.

The League agrees with the WCA to oppose this bill, but it is also beyond our scope to track this bill.

The WCA publishes a weekly [Hot List](#) indicating their stance on bills. I encourage you to subscribe.

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 5372 was heard on 1/26 at 1:30 PM in Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee. Concerns were raised by several timber industry representatives that the TLT tool removes too many trust lands out of the overall portfolio used for timber extraction related industries. **There is wide support for the TLT program by the general public.**

[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 5390 is scheduled for Executive Session on 2/2 at 1:30 PM in the Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee. There appears to be wide support of this bill from all sectors, including small forestland owners.

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 1078 is scheduled for Executive Session on 2/3 at 10:30 AM in the Local Government Committee. We anticipate many amendments to the bill. Once those are evaluated, the League will reassess its position. It is likely the bill will be reintroduced in the 2024 session.

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.