



January 17, 2024

Snohomish County Council Member Nehring
Snohomish County Council Member Dunn
Snohomish County Council Member Peterson
Snohomish County Council Member Mead
Snohomish County Council Member Low

Via email

Dear Council Members,

My name is Kate Lunceford, and I am writing on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Washington. After careful study the League has taken a [position](#) that healthy forests are essential to habitat for a diversity of plant and animal life, to the hydrologic cycle, and to carbon storage to mitigate global warming. They are essential to a forest products industry with the jobs and goods they provide. And are essential to the economic and aesthetic values of their recreational opportunities.

The League of Women Votes of Washington also appreciates the Snohomish County Council's participation in protection of mature forests through the Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) funding. The League supports consideration of the [two additional parcels](#) submitted to the Council and recommended by the Center for Responsible Forestry and we ask that the Council add these parcels to its letter to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) confirming its participation.

The NCS program is new to both the DNR and Snohomish County. But the intentions are clear: preserve carbon-dense, structurally complex mature forest, trust land beneficiaries and rural communities.

Commissioner Franz changed the first proposal to Snohomish County, so we note that she seems willing to consider changes. We are heartened by her strong affirmation to "double down" on the NCS program to bring more mature forest land into the program with further funding.

DNR has said to the County that they wouldn't nominate parcels with upcoming timber sales that are slated for logging in the next 2 years. But, in Whatcom, King, and Clallam DNR included fiscal year 2024/25 sales. With Whatcom and King, they did so because the County Councils requested those sales to be nominated. It would be entirely appropriate for the county to propose additional parcels to DNR. The parcels are both subject to logging in 2024 but they have not gone through the regulatory process yet. It is in the public interest and in the intent of the legislation to save mature forests subject to loss in the near future.

The two parcels the community has recommended do not include State Forest Board Transfer lands. There would be no revenue delay to junior taxing districts. All the County's concerns expressed at the roundtable discussion regarding junior taxing districts would not apply to either of these parcels.

We deeply respect the stated tribal concerns and believe that putting these parcels into conservation would not impact Tribes Usual and Accustomed hunting and harvesting rights on the land. It is our understanding that they would have the same access as before. The parcels would not be put into park/recreation status. No additional trails or recreation would be done or encouraged.

Please add the two additional parcels submitted to the Council to its letter to the Department of Natural Resources.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to Snohomish County.

Sincerely,

Kate Lunceford

Issue Chair - Forests

League of Women Voters of Washington

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