



HILARY S. FRANZ
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS

January 4, 2018

The Honorable Brian Blake
Chair, House Agriculture and Natural Resources
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Vincent Buys
Ranking Member, House Agriculture and
Natural Resources
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Joe Fitzgibbon
Chair, House Environment
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable David Taylor
Ranking Member, House Environment
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The Honorable Kevin Van De Wege
Chair, Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural
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P.O. Box 40424
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The Honorable Judy Warnick
Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Water,
Natural Resources and Parks
P.O. Box 40413
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The Honorable Reuven Carlyle
Chair, Senate Energy, Environment and
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The Honorable Doug Ericksen
Ranking Member, Senate Energy, Environment
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The Honorable Frank Chopp
Speaker of the House
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Dan Kristiansen
House Minority Leader
P.O. Box 40600
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The Honorable Sharon Nelson
Senate Majority Leader
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Olympia, WA 98504-0600

The Honorable Mark Schoesler
Senate Minority Leader
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Dear Legislators:

As the legislature once more takes up the question of Washington's response to climate change, I'd like to offer my thinking on prospective carbon policy, from my perspective as manager and steward of our public lands and waters.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER DNR IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

Here in Washington, we are the stewards and beneficiaries of productive and majestic forests, rivers, shorelines, mountains, farmland, and prairies. These amazing lands and waters deliver immense benefits to our communities. They fund education for our children, provide direct livelihoods to hundreds of thousands of our neighbors, put healthy food on our tables, improve our health, connect us to our cultural roots, and offer quality of life to all of us, from La Push to the Palouse.

As the Commissioner of Public Lands for the State of Washington, it is my job to steward our 5.6 million acres of public lands and ensure that these lands remain healthy and productive not just for our use, but for future generations. Since 1970, this stewardship has earned \$9 billion in non-tax income for schools, counties, and other beneficiaries. Looking forward, this responsibility calls us to scan the future and anticipate threats to the long-term productivity of our lands and waters, so that we might mitigate threats and maximize opportunities. As I listen to the scientists, it is clear that climate change poses the greatest threat to DNR's long-term ability to fulfill its mission of supporting Washington's communities, citizens, and landscapes.

While we still have much to learn, we know with certainty that climate change will impact our wildfires, forests, waters and soils, and the timber, fish, shellfish, crops, and wild plants that sustain our communities. In fact, we are already living with such impacts and know that they will grow in the coming decades. Two of the worst fire seasons in recorded history have been in the past four years (2014 and 2015). During this time, taxpayers have spent more than \$500 million fighting escalating wildfires. Snowpack in the Washington Cascades, which provides irrigation for much of our world-famous agricultural industry, has decreased approximately 25 percent.

Scientific analyses conducted by our state universities indicate that impacts are likely to worsen, including increased potential for summer water shortages, a rise in forest mortality from wildfire and disease, increased coastal flooding, higher human health risks from heat-related illnesses and water-borne diseases, and impacts on shellfish from increasing ocean acidification. These threats pose risks to the valuable natural resource jobs and livelihoods in our communities statewide, such as the 100,000 timber jobs, 32,000 shellfish industry jobs, and 200,000 recreation jobs.

This reality demands two things from us. First, we must begin in earnest the work of adapting to our changing climate, by building and strengthening natural and community resilience in the face of these growing impacts. Over the past three years, DNR has conducted an internal assessment process, led by a panel of scientific experts, to examine how climate change directly impacts our agency's responsibilities as the steward of state-owned and -managed lands and waters (see dnr.wa.gov/climate-change).

The next step is for DNR's land managers, scientists, regulators, and emergency responders to work with partners around the state to identify specific response options to reduce risks, increase resilience, and ensure the productive and healthy functioning of 5.6 million acres of state lands and waters. I look forward to working with you on that effort.

Second, let's not fool ourselves into thinking that we can adapt our way out of the hole we have dug. To get out of this hole, we first need to stop digging. Through reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ramping up carbon sequestration, we must attack carbon pollution by adopting effective, smart carbon policy in Washington State. While it is true that Washington is small in global emissions, it is also true that we provide significant national and global leadership when it comes to innovation, technology, and sustainable natural resource management – all of which are needed to combat climate change. And we are

home to rich forests, soils, and aquatic lands that offer climate change solutions that could stretch well beyond our state borders.

The threats to our healthy and productive lands are real, we are already late in responding, and we cannot afford to wait for others to bring leadership to this challenge. I believe Washington State's leadership is needed and timely, and I urge our state to act.

Therefore, as we move into 2018, and the legislature and our communities around the state contemplate this consequential challenge, DNR offers the following principles that we believe are critical to successfully approaching climate change and carbon policy:

1. Tackle the root cause - carbon pollution - and invest in reduction efforts

- Establish greenhouse gas reduction (GHG) policies, such as pricing or capping carbon, that effectively reduce pollution;
- Focus investments on activities with a strong nexus to reducing carbon pollution; and
- Minimize unintended effects of carbon policies on Washington residents and energy and trade-intensive businesses such as the pulp and paper, agriculture, and natural resource industries.

2. Strengthen the health and resilience of our lands, waters, and communities

- Address impacts we are already seeing from climate change and that will only increase in the future, including wildfire, forest health issues, ocean acidification, sea level rise, flooding, landslides, drought, heatwaves, and extreme weather;
- Implement long-term strategies to support the health and viability of rural, natural resource-dependent communities, including investments to improve wildfire suppression and forest health, support water storage and reduce drought, and expand renewable energy systems; and
- Increase the viability and resiliency of agricultural lands to ensure our state's agricultural economy, our capacity to produce food for future populations, and the long-term health of our soil.

3. Accelerate carbon sequestration

- Tap into the potential of Washington's forests, farms, rangeland, coastlines, wetlands, riparian corridors, and soils to sequester and store carbon; and
- Invest in statewide carbon sequestration programs that incentivize keeping working farms and forests working and maximizing carbon stored in trees and soils.

4. Invest in and incentivize solutions with multiple benefits

- Incentivize and invest in the management of working forests in ways that increase carbon storage, grow forest management jobs, increase soil moisture storage, increase timber value, sustain timber production, improve summer stream flows, and increase resilience to disturbance;
- Incentivize and invest in alternative cropping systems and range management to increase soil carbon storage, increase soil moisture storage and increase resilience to drought;
- Incentivize and invest in marine restoration efforts to address local effects of ocean acidification, increase aquatic carbon storage, and improve shellfish production and salmon habitat;

The Honorable Brian Blake, et al

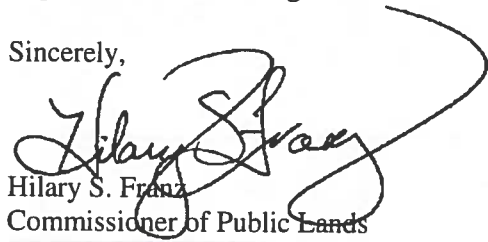
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- Invest in riverine, floodplain, and wetland restoration to strengthen resilience to floods, improve salmon habitat, increase public safety, increase water filtration and retention, and protect infrastructure; and
- Invest in tree planning, planting, and management in cities and towns to improve air quality, increase carbon storage, improve water quality during high-rain stormwater events, improve quality of life, and decrease long-term healthcare costs.

When Washington faces significant leadership challenges, we are a state that steps forward with confidence, collaboration, and vision. This moment in time demands we bring the best of ourselves and strive together to achieve maximum reduction of atmospheric carbon and optimal adaptation to the impacts of climate change. I look forward to working with you to seize this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary S. Franz", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Hilary S. Franz
Commissioner of Public Lands

cc: Washington State Senators and Representatives
The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee