

RCW 79.155.010 Findings. (1) The legislature finds that since the 1980s, about seventeen percent of Washington's commercial forests have been converted to other land uses.

(2) The legislature further finds that as these forests vanish, so do the multiple benefits they provide to our communities such as local timber jobs, clean air and water, carbon storage, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation areas, and open space.

(3) The legislature further finds that it has provided policy direction to the department of natural resources to protect working forest and natural resource lands at risk of conversion, while maintaining the department's obligation to manage the state's fiduciary trust lands and financial assets in the interest of the beneficiaries of the respective trust lands and assets.

(4) The legislature further finds that there are numerous tools available to acquire open space and recreation lands, but limited tools to protect working forestlands.

(5) The legislature further finds that currently the department of natural resources lacks a full complement of policy and management tools necessary to protect or manage working forestlands at high risk of conversion.

(6) The legislature further finds that through modest enhancements to existing department of natural resources' programs and authorities, the legislature can expand Washington's ability to protect communities' working forestlands, while simultaneously improving the revenue generating performance of fiduciary trust lands managed by the department of natural resources.

(7) The legislature further finds that there has been past and present legislative intent to ensure continued public access for recreation compatible with the purposes of the lands involved.

(8) The legislature further finds that there exists an interest by local communities, governments, and conservation organizations in cooperating in the establishment of working community forests. [2011 c 216 s 1.]