

RCW 84.40.033 Valuation of timber and timberlands—Legislative findings. It is hereby found and declared that:

(1) Timber constitutes the primary renewable resource of this state.

(2) It is the public policy of this state that timberlands be managed in such a way as to assure a continuous supply of forest products.

(3) It is in the public interest that forest valuation and taxation policy encourage and permit timberland owners to manage their lands to sustain maximum production of raw materials for the forest industry, to maintain other public benefits, and to maintain a stable and equitable tax base.

(4) Forest management entails continuous and accumulative burdens of taxes, protection, management costs, interest on investment, and risks of loss from fire, insects, disease and the elements over long periods of time prior to harvest and realization of income.

(5) Existing timberland valuation and taxation procedures under the general property tax system are consistent with the public interest and the public policy herein set forth only when due consideration and recognition is given to all relevant factors in determining the true and fair value in money of each tract or lot of timberland.

(6) To assure equality and uniformity of taxation of timberland, uniform principles should be applied for determining the true and fair value in money of such timberlands, taking into account all pertinent factors such as regional differences in species and growing conditions.

(7) The true and fair value in money of timberlands must be determined through application of sound valuation principles based upon the highest and best use of such properties. The highest and best use of timberlands, whether cut-over, selectively harvested, or containing merchantable or immature timber, is to manage, protect and harvest them in a manner which will realize the greatest economic value and assure the maximum continuous supply of forest products. This requires that merchantable timber originally on timberlands be harvested gradually to maintain a continuous supply until immature timber reaches the optimum age or size for harvesting, that immature timber on timberlands be managed and protected for extensive periods until it reaches such optimum age or size and that such timberlands be continually restocked as harvested.

(8) Reforestation entails an integrated forest management program which includes gradual harvesting of existing merchantable timber, management and protection of immature timber during its growth cycle until it reaches the optimum size or age for harvesting and a continual preparation and restocking of areas after harvest. Such management of timberlands is now generally followed and practiced in this state and it is in the public interest that such management be continued and encouraged.

(9) The prices at which merchantable timber is sold generally reflect values based upon immediate harvesting, and the prices at which both merchantable and immature timber are sold frequently reflect circumstances peculiar to the particular purchaser. Such prices generally make little or no allowance for the continuous and accumulative burdens of taxes, protection, management costs, interest on investment, and risks of loss from fire, insects, disease, and the elements which must be borne by the owner of timberlands over long

periods of time prior to the time timber is harvested and income is realized. Such prices do not, therefore, provide a reliable measure of the true and fair value in money. Accordingly, both the public policy and the public interest of this state and sound principles of timber valuation require that in the determination of the true and fair value in money of such properties appropriate and full allowance be made for such continuous and accumulative burdens over the period of time between assessment and harvest. [1963 c 249 § 3.]

Severability—1963 c 249: See note following RCW 84.40.031.