

## SB 5761 - DIGEST

Finds and declares that: (1) The long-term stewardship that is provided by family forest landowners in urban growth areas and rural areas is important for maintaining the evergreen state's special character and quality of life and provides citizens living in the urban/rural interface with an important buffer that provides aesthetic values at minimal cost to the taxpayers;

(2) Many family forest landowners live and raise their families on their forest land, or otherwise foster intergenerational involvement, creating an emotional attachment to and love for the land that increases the likelihood of continued ownership and management of family forests by future generations;

(3) Many family forests are characterized by a "light touch on the land." This includes: Species diversity; low-impact harvesting; small harvest openings and long stand rotations with multiple thinning entries; and a variety of nontimber management objectives that benefit the public;

(4) Family forest landowners provide: Family wage jobs to their local communities; a reliable tax base to their counties, generally utilizing fewer public services than taxes paid; and a way of life integral to rural communities;

(5) Family forest lands provide significant benefits to the economic and environmental well-being of Washington's citizens, including: Clean air and water; habitat for a broad array of fish, wildlife, and plant species, including some threatened and endangered species; and a variety of renewable natural resource products;

(6) If these lands were to be converted to nonforestry uses, these benefits would be lost to future generations as well as current generations of citizens;

(7) Current forest practices rules and other administrative regulations and complexity pose significant challenges to the continued ownership and management of family forests, creating a disincentive to their continued management as forest lands and are among the causes of their conversion to nonforest land uses;

(8) It is in the best interests of the citizens of the state of Washington and the environment that legislation and rules be developed and implemented that will encourage family forest ownership and long-term management planning; and

(9) It is also in the best interests of the citizens of the state of Washington and the environment that family forest landowners and the state of Washington are given the opportunity to enter into long-term management plans that will provide enhanced flexibility and secure the many benefits of forest land management for current and future generations of Washington citizens.