January 24, 2025

Commissioner of Public Lands Dave Upthegrove
Department of Natural Resources
1111 Washington Street SE
Olympia WA 98504

Dear Commissioner Upthegrove:

Congratulations on your election to serve as Washington's Commissioner of Public Lands. We look forward to working with you to address the many challenges facing state trust lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), including the growing risk of wildfires and maintaining the many benefits of these lands provided to all Washingtonians.

We share many common goals: healthy forests and healthy communities, jobs and revenue for essential public services, producing renewable wood products, and ensuring the DNR has the revenue necessary to maintain its workforce of dedicated professionals and to continue providing the public access to its lands.

During your swearing-in ceremony you announced a six-month pause on certain timber sales. According to the information provided by your office, this pause encompasses more than a quarter of the timber sales DNR plans to conduct in 2025. We are very concerned about the impact this decision will have on timber harvest volumes and revenue to the beneficiaries, many of whom are relying heavily on these funds at this critical time in their budgets.

The pause also comes at a time when our state faces a significant budget shortfall, which will require difficult decisions across all departments and agencies. Because the DNR receives revenues from timber sales on state trust lands, the pause could jeopardize your own agency's finances, operations, and personnel, including those responsible for wildfire prevention and response work.

Would you share with us, in detail, how you plan to implement this pause while delivering on your commitments to maintain revenues for beneficiaries, avoid disruption to DNR's finances and employees, and provide the timber supplies necessary to sustain the remaining forest sector infrastructure that makes forest health treatments possible while also creating jobs and economic activity in rural Washington?

We have serious concerns and questions, but appreciate your comments to transparency, accountability, and clear communication. We would also welcome the opportunity to meet to hear these details directly from you.

Sincerely,