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WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

October 19, 2023

Forestry Advisory Committee
c/o Cliff Strong
Planning and Development Services
5280 Northwest Drive
Bellingham, WA 98226

Dear Forestry Advisory Committee

The Whatcom County Council recently adopted Ordinance 2023-058, establishing a new Whatcom County Forest Resilience Task Force. This 19-member advisory board is tasked with developing a comprehensive Whatcom County Forest Resilience Plan. I am writing to ask for your assistance in identifying a representative of the Forestry Advisory Committee to participate in this task force's important work.

Forestry issues are complex, requiring expertise in science, industry, climate, and natural resource management. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide a framework for coordination and collaboration with local, state, federal, and tribal governments and other key stakeholders.

Whatcom County possesses a number of forest lands that would benefit from more active management. The Forest Resilience Plan will incorporate community values and outline science- and evidence-based strategies and actions for sustaining a thriving timber economy, restoring healthy forest ecosystems for fish and wildlife, improving wildfire resistance, and increasing the overall resilience of county forest lands to climate impacts.

The Task Force will also evaluate relevant policies around forestry and make recommendations for best practices. Within Whatcom County government, there are several departments with jurisdiction over forest land management, as well as a number of local planning and regulatory documents with a nexus to forestry. On state public lands, forest management is guided by policies that do not address the causes or impacts of climate change. The Forest Resilience Plan will include a review of applicable County and State policies as well as recommendations about how to move forward based on desired outcomes.

The Whatcom County Council invites you to appoint two representatives to serve on the Forest Resilience Task Force. Please contact the County Council Office at 360-778-5010 or jnixon@co.whatcom.wa.us by December 31st, 2023 to provide the names and contact information of your designated representatives.

Respectfully,



Barry Buchanan, Chair
Whatcom County Council

c: AB2023-640
Correspondence file