

Sophia Hernandez
Testimony to DNR, Nov. 7th

Thank you and hello to the members of the Board of Natural Resources, my name is Sophia Hernandez and I am a current undergraduate student studying Political Science and Education at the University of Washington. As many others before me have expressed, the Department of Natural Resources ought to halt the clear cutting of the legacies forest across Washington and reconsider how these harms to the forests undermine the values and legitimacy of our educational institutions and government agencies.

In elementary school, I learned about the important role that trees play in protecting the environment. However, it seems that this science should be reiterated to emphasize the importance of protecting the trees that sustain our life on earth. Especially as we continue to face the effects of climate change, we know that the older a tree is, the more carbon it sequesters. Forests protect biodiversity, forests protect waterways from pollutants, forests cool our environment, and forests improve the quality of the air we breathe. It is obvious that preserving our forests supports human life beyond our own years. These long-term benefits outweigh any short-lived accumulations of wealth in the grand scheme of sustaining human life in the face of climate change.

In a state that prides itself on being a leader in climate sustainability, I question why state agencies are actively destroying parts of our environment. In statements made both by the DNR and OSPI, they are committed to “protecting public lands, managing healthy forests, and providing benefits to the people of Washington.” Though, these commitments have not yet been fulfilled and may not be until the permanent preservation of legacy forests. I question why representatives from institutions like the University of Washington sign off on the destruction of

our forests when the UW is committed to sustainability by promoting “a just, resilient, and healthy planet.”

Ultimately, I ask that board members, departments, and institutions begin taking actions that align with the values and goals they supposedly support. I ask that people within our government act in transparent ways that allow people to maintain faith in our institutions. And I ask that those in power do what’s necessary to invest in the sustenance of human life and end the clear cutting of legacy forests. Thank you.