

1 **Supporting the Adoption of a Mature Forest Policy for State Forestlands**

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3 WHEREAS the onset of the El Niño warming cycle exacerbates the climate crisis with
4 unprecedented levels of warming (1, 2, 3) and threatens Washington State with a dangerous fire
5 season, a warmer, drier winter and ensuing drought conditions (4); and

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7 WHEREAS natural climate solutions have the potential to provide one-third of the cost-effective
8 carbon mitigation necessary to meet global 2030 climate goals (5), with the Pacific Northwest
9 forest biome among the best in the world at sequestering carbon (6); and

10
11 WHEREAS mature trees store more carbon than younger trees (7, 8), biodiverse forests
12 sequester more carbon than working forest plantations (9), and natural forests better support
13 biodiversity (10, 11); and

14
15 WHEREAS the Washington Department of Natural Resources manages 2.1 million acres of
16 forests (12) but has retired their moratorium on harvesting pre -1900 trees (13) resulting in
17 mature forests being clear-cut at an alarming rate of 5,000 acres per year (14);

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19 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washington State Democratic Central Committee
20 calls upon the Department of Natural Resources to formulate a Mature Forest Policy that
21 identifies and protects carbon dense, structurally complex, mature forest stands on state lands
22 in a way that accelerates the development of structurally complex forests in areas that lack
23 complexity, or are vulnerable to habitat fragmentation, catastrophic wildfire, disease, or pest
24 infestation; and

25
26 THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the
27 Democratic members of the Washington State House and Senate, the Department of Natural
28 Resources, and the Commissioner of Public Lands.

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30 (1) <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/july-2023-is-hottest-month-ever-recorded-on-earth/>

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32 (2) <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/this-summer-record-breaking-heat-waves-would-not-have-happened-without-climate-change/>

33
34 (3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyacrd1d-cU>

35
36 (4) <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/environment/wa-likely-to-stay-warm-dry-then-this-winter-el-nino-could-settle-in/>

37
38 (5) <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.1710465114>

39
40 (6) <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/eap.2039>

41
42 (7) <https://e360.yale.edu/features/why-keeping-mature-forests-intact-is-key-to-the-climate-fight>

43
44 (8) <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2019.00027/full>

45
46 (9) <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ab5f75>

47
48 (10) <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/06/22/planting-trees-threatens-forest/>

49
50 (11) <https://phys.org/news/2021-04-limited-tree-plantations-biodiversity.html>

51
52 **Submitted by** The Environment and Climate Caucus on August 26 for consideration at
53 WSDCC's Sept 30, 2023 meeting.

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55 Passed by the WSDCC at their September 30 meeting

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- 44 (12) <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/page/forest-resources-0>
- 45 (13) https://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/em_bc_bnr_minutes_05032022_final.pdf (p.22 line 34)
- 46 (14) <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/save-washingtons-legacy-forests-to-save-ourselves/>

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