

Testimony of Jim McEntire, Government Affairs Committee Chair of the Port Angeles Business Association

Before the House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee

February 8, 2019

Amenities.

I'm Jim McEntire, live in Clallam County close to Sequim, and I'm here to speak in favor of this bill on behalf of the Port Angeles Business Association.

First, thank you Chairman Blake for sponsoring House Bill 1546 and thanks equally to all the co-sponsors. Thanks even more for scheduling this hearing. We believe the bill is good policy and we sincerely appreciate the Legislature exercising its very important and necessary fiduciary role as trustee for all our state's forested lands trusts. We will do all we can to encourage a floor vote for this bill, and for its eventual enactment into law.

I encourage you to widen the aperture and gain some perspective on the Marbled Murrelet situation: as you heard from the DNR staff on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at your work session, state-owned habitat for the bird is only 9 percent of the total habitat acreage in our state, and only 14 percent of the current and potential habitat for the bird. Using the bird's population numbers in DNR's Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and doing the arithmetic, there are 391 acres of good habitat for every female bird that nests in state-owned trees. One bird for every 391 acres of state forested lands already set aside for the bird. That seems to be a fairly low population density. Common sense tells me that if habitat were the primary variable in maintaining the population viability, there are many nesting sites that are going unused. Therefore, if, as it were, "the vacancy sign is lighted" on state-owned timberlands, why is it necessary to set aside more lands from future timber harvest and foreclose the possibility of harvest revenues to trust beneficiaries: to wit: the State Treasury and counties and taxing districts within them.

One other word about DNR's population analysis for the bird: there are two scenarios – one ominously titled "risk", and the other titled "enhancement". Don't be misled by these labels – as the Population Viability Analysis clearly states, "risk" equals the real world where much is not understood about non-habitat ecological factors such as predation and at-sea food source availability. "Enhancement" assumes those unknowns away, and posits that habitat is the only ecological variable important to the bird's future survival. Reminds me of the old saying: "when the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail".