

Chair Taylor, Vice-chair Bonham, and members of the Labor and Business Committee

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SB 882, introduced at our request by Sen. Brian Boquist.

My wife and I live in Washington County, and are small woodland owners, with parcels in Washington and Douglas County totaling 220 acres. We have worked hard to be good stewards in sustainably managing for a variety of values, including timber production, wildlife habitat, and non-timber forest products. The nature of small woodland management is feast and famine regarding income opportunities. While there are periodic opportunities for timber harvest (sometimes many years apart), there are much more frequent needs to pay expenses for taxes, road maintenance, fire protection, and more. Small woodland owners look for income opportunities to meet these frequent expense needs.

One of those opportunities is producing and selling bigleaf maple syrup, tapped and processed from the sap collected from our maple trees. This is a home-grown product, involving boiling down the sap to produce syrup, which can then be sold to create supplemental income. The problem is that the quantities we can produce are relatively small, so markets for the syrup can be hard to find.

A natural place to market our home-grown syrup would be at farm-to-market venues, roadside stands, and food fairs – otherwise known as farm-direct sales. Many farm products are sold in that manner, encouraged by past legislation that permits such sales. However, the list of farm-direct sales permitted by legislation does not include bigleaf maple syrup, or other similar tree sap products. SB 882 is specifically directed to correct this situation, by including bigleaf maple syrup in the list of permitted farm-direct sales.

We recently became aware that another bill to address farm-direct sales, SB 570, has been amended to include bigleaf maple syrup and other tree sap products. The bill amendment is SB 570-1. This amended bill appears to meet the need we are addressing, and we would support this bill in lieu of SB 882 if it is favorably considered by the legislature. In any event, we appreciate the support of Sen. Boquist in addressing our concern.

Thank you.

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