

Submitter: Devon Lawson-McCourt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure: SB1593

Honorable members of the Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue,

Today, I write to you to offer unwavering support for SB1593, an Act that embodies the principles of equity, environmental stewardship, and community welfare. This legislation proposes a visionary shift towards a more just and sustainable model of resource management, one that recognizes the intrinsic value of our natural environment and the collective responsibility we hold towards its preservation.

SB1593 seeks to impose a new tax on the gross proceeds from the sale of unprocessed timber cut on private land exceeding 500 acres in common ownership. This measure is not merely a tax; it is a reclamation of our environmental assets for the public good. It challenges the status quo of unchecked exploitation and aims to rectify the imbalances that have long favored private profit over public welfare.

The revenue generated from this tax will be a boon for our communities, providing critical funding to counties and enhancing our capacity to protect homes, neighborhoods, and water supplies from the devastating effects of wildfire damage. As we witness the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, fueled by climate change and poor forest management, the urgency of this Act cannot be overstated. It offers a proactive approach to safeguard our communities and natural resources, ensuring that we are not merely reactive to environmental catastrophes but are taking meaningful steps to prevent them.

Furthermore, SB1593 proposes the repeal of the current forest products harvest tax regime, a system that has fallen short of addressing the environmental and social impacts of timber harvesting. This Act represents a bold step forward, aligning our tax policies with our environmental and community protection goals. It is a testament to our commitment to stewardship of the land and the well-being of future generations.

By referring this Act to the people at the 2024 general election, we are empowering our citizens to have a direct say in the stewardship of our natural resources. This democratic process ensures transparency, accountability, and public engagement, reinforcing the principle that our natural environment is a shared heritage and responsibility.

In conclusion, SB1593 is a transformative piece of legislation that stands as a beacon of hope for a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient future. It is an investment in our communities, our environment, and our collective well-being. I urge you to

support this Act, recognizing it as a pivotal step towards a future where the wealth of our natural resources is equitably shared and wisely managed for the benefit of all.

Thank you for considering my testimony on this critical issue.