

To: Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Boquist, and members of the Senate Finance Committee
Re: Support for SB 1593

I've lived in Selma since 1993, and understand first hand the threat of climate-driven wildfires. I have been advocating for years for just the sort of funding for home and community wildfire preparation that SB 1593 sets out to provide.

I support the bill's provision for a fair and equitable funding source, through a tax rate that incrementally increases with the size of the timber seller's total land holdings. This will enable low income rural residents and communities like mine to fund and implement science-backed wildfire safety measures. Tree plantations, increasingly owned by timber investment corporations, have been creating higher fire risks to our rural neighborhoods.

The great need for revenue for rural counties struggling to fund county services since the disappearance of the severance tax in the 1990's warrants SB 1593's provision for sending funding to these counties. I also recognize that funding county services through timber tax receipts could create an unhealthy dependency on the type and scale of timber harvests that are harmful to communities.

For this and other reasons, I strongly support incentives in the bill such as a reduced tax rate for forestland owners who grow their trees longer, like those with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. Longer rotations and protection of mature and old growth trees are highly effective natural climate solutions that will increase carbon stores on the landscape over time. I also strongly support the bill's funding for post-fire drinking water restoration efforts.

Establishing a Work Group to consider all aspects of SB 1593 is a needed step toward addressing community wildfire safety needs, county funding, and tax fairness in our state.

Carol Valentine, Selma