



**DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES**

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
OF PUBLIC LANDS**

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March 15, 2021

The Honorable Brad Hawkins
Washington State Senate
107 Irv Newhouse Building
PO Box 40412
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Keith Goehner
Washington State House of Representatives
122C Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Michael Steele
Washington State House of Representatives
122F Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Senator and Representatives,

I am writing to express my strong support for the budget proviso seeking funds for the C6 Forest to Farm (C6) biochar demonstration project. As the Commissioner of Public Lands leading the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), I recognize the critical role this effort plays in helping meet our forest health needs. C6's desire to turn wildfire fuels in our forests into a product with market value represents the type of innovative approach needed to move forward our forest health, public safety, and rural development goals.

In addition to managing 2.4 million acres of state forestlands, DNR is the state's wildfire fighting force. The growing size and increasing intensity of wildfires continue to strain available resources to fight fires and protect lives, property, and livelihoods. In central and eastern Washington there are nearly 2.7 million acres of forestlands in need of treatments to increase landscape health and resiliency, an effort that will require engagement from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. We welcome C6's approach to forest health restoration as an important piece of this broad, landscape-scale work.

C6's proof-of-concept project has the potential to benefit private industry, forest health, and local economies.

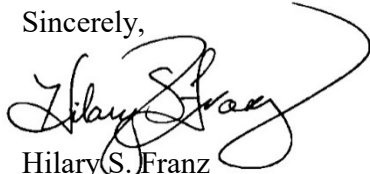
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As a product created from forest waste materials, biochar presents an opportunity to remove excess fuels from fire-prone forests while manufacturing a valuable soil amendment for agriculture. C6's efforts have received broad support within the community and region, which will be critical to achieving success in the long term. DNR will continue to embrace innovative approaches like this project that support our forest health needs and generate positive outcomes in local economies.

In addition to the benefits outlined above, designed biochar sequesters carbon, makes a marketable product for the agricultural industry, and removes fuel from our forests, making our landscapes and communities more resilient.

I strongly support C6 Forest to Farm's pilot project. It is the right next step for us to achieve our shared environmental and economic goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary S. Franz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Hilary S. Franz
Commissioner of Public Lands