

# Evergreen Cities



As our population grows, trees are replaced with impervious blacktop and concrete. Meanwhile climate change is increasing runoff pollution and flooding. Trees in our cities are one of the most cost-effective ways to improve our water quality, air quality and our quality of life. This proposal ensures the Evergreen State is full of Evergreen Cities.



## Benefits

Healthy and expanded urban forests will be helpful to communities and people across the state:

- ✓ Trees reduce runoff, a top Puget Sound pollutant, and save tax payers over \$2.4 billion in stormwater management.
- ✓ The right trees in the right place can reduce energy costs and associated greenhouse gas emissions by 30% for Eastern Washington home and business owners.
- ✓ This proposal will increase communities' goals, objectives and management plans for urban forests and the environmental services they provide.
- ✓ Trees absorb air pollutants that cause asthma and global warming.

## Legislative Proposal

The Evergreen Cities Act restores, retains and establishes more trees and forests in our communities by creating:

**Inventory and assessment:** The bill directs the Department of Natural Resources to develop a statewide inventory and assessment of our communities' forests, providing critical technical assistance for local government ordinance and forest plan development.

**Funding for local governments:** New revenue is generated by utility ratepayers for cities and counties to develop and implement tree ordinances, forest management plans, and for utilities to increase service reliability, leveraging increased federal funds.

**Partnerships and education:** Local governments will engage volunteers, conservation, homeowners and civic groups in forest plan development and implementation.

**Regional performance standards:** Department of Community Trade and Economic Development convenes advisory committee and creates rules for eco-regional performance standards for tree retention, forest restoration, urban forest canopy, ordinances and management plans to achieve environmental objectives.

**Tree ordinances and management plans:** Local governments are funded to update or adopt tree ordinances and urban forest management plans to meet these standards.

**Lead contacts:** Heath Packard, Audubon Washington, 360-790-5680 or [hpackard@audubon.org](mailto:hpackard@audubon.org)  
Lisa Paribello, Audubon Washington, 360-786-8020 x201 or [lparibello@audubon.org](mailto:lparibello@audubon.org)