

Bumbalov, Stoyan (DES)

Subject: FW: postpone implementation of new WWUIC

From: Lynn Fitz-Hugh <lynn@fitz-hugh.org>

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:57 AM

To: Curb, Dustin (DES) <dustin.curb@des.wa.gov>; Bumbalov, Stoyan (DES) <stoyan.bumbalov@des.wa.gov>

Cc: Marianne Tompkins <marianned.tompkins@gmail.com>

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External Email

Hi Dustin:

Thank you for the meeting you had with Marianne and I. You asked about the unintended consequences we were referring to. Below is a list of the many climate consequences. It seems as you are getting more deeply into trying to implement this code you are running into many problems. I don't see how it can possibly be ready by Oct 29th and not carry huge problems. Please ask the council to postpone implementation of this code till these problems are resolved.

This code carries the following unintended and drastic impacts:

1. Everything that climate science is telling us runs in the opposite direction of this policy. One of the critical tipping points is forests inability to recover from multiple stressors of climate change. Forest fires, or massive clear cutting, release huge amounts of carbon, thereby heating up the planet and driving more forest fires. This ironically can lead to more of what it is trying to prevent.
2. "The world's total yearly emissions of carbon are about 11 billion tons. However, the net annual increase in elemental carbon in the atmosphere is about 5.4 billion tons, because 5.8 billion tons are sequestered by land, plants and ocean. of the three, forests are the greatest remover of carbon dioxide on the planet." This is the work of trees everywhere and why we must protect them...
3. Trees are protective against drought because they draw water into the soil.
4. At the same time, they also do storm water management. Having a regular size house lot without trees will lead to more flooding – especially as climate change leads to more intense rainstorms.
5. Clear cuts on hilled lots can lead to mudslides and move water downhill rather than into aquifers for water recharge.
6. Trees are becoming much more vulnerable to heat and pests under climate change – we are losing them under climate at an alarming rate – we cannot afford this sort of additional loss.
7. Saplings are dying in this heat – it is harder to successfully "replant" – that will not be the solution to cutting existing trees.
8. The newest tree science of the last decade shows the largest trees, not the young ones, store the most carbon and draw down the most carbon per year. Thus, cutting big older trees, even with the intention of replanting, is a GHG negative.
9. Heavily treed areas can in summer heat make it 3 to 10 degrees cooler. As temperatures increase with climate change, we need this cooling. Running air conditioners instead leads to more GHG producing electrical use, and has the potential to overload the electrical grid.

10. Similarly, studies show that having a tree within 6 feet of a house produces a slight warming effect in the winter (protecting against winds) and that year-round there is less heating and cooling costs when a tree is close to a house.
11. Trees draw down pollutants, and it is a well established scientific fact that people living in neighborhoods with trees have lower asthma rates and other health problems than those living in neighborhoods with few trees.
12. Studies also show that being able to see even one tree out your window or walk among trees is protective against depression.
13. WA state is predicted to go from a current population of 7 million in 2020 to 9 million in 2040 with a 27% increase in population making it the 7th largest growing state in the US. This will result in a corresponding amount of development, we estimate that this amount of tree loss could result in significant release of greenhouse gas.
14. We also estimate it will result in a significant loss of habitat for animals, birds and insects many already threatened by climate change.
15. Trees, because they hold moisture in them at all times of the year, have a fire dampening effect. Embers in the air are a problem that can travel for miles, and contractors can address this through fire resistant building materials.
16. This code should not incentivize cutting trees over the use of protective fire materials—the solution that should be emphasized is not building in fire zones and using fire resistant materials.
17. As written, this code is a nightmare for city building code inspectors. It requires a page long set of data calculations just to determine whether defensible space is 30' or 100'. This also makes it hard for developers to do planning without that information readily available.

It is our contention that the real problem is housing/ development next to forests, and that a more appropriate code would be less overreaching and concentrate on those communities that directly butt forests. We ask the code to require fire protective building materials in forested areas.

Thanks,

Lynn Fitz-Hugh

Executive Director

She/Her pronouns

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Friends of Trees Action group of



<https://www.restoringearthconnection.org/>

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