

**JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AGENDA REQUEST

TO: Board of County Commissioners
Josh Peter, County Administrator

FROM: Heidi Eisenhour, Commissioner

DATE: October 6, 2026

SUBJECT: Dabob Natural Area Expansion Trust Land Transfer support

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

Jefferson County has been asked by the Department of Natural Resources to submit a letter of support for DNR's applications to the Trust Land Transfer (TLT) program for acquiring key forested habitat lands in the Dabob Bay Natural Area boundary.

ANALYSIS:

Dabob Bay is one of the natural treasures of Hood Canal and Puget Sound and funding via the TLT program would provide more complete protection and improved long-term viability for the Dabob Bay ecosystem as a whole, for the shellfish industry, and treaty reserved resources of four Tribes.

In 2020, a coalition of regional and statewide conservation groups, shellfish growers, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe urged DNR to expand the Dabob Bay Natural Area. We added our support for this expansion in August 2023 because of the economic and ecosystem contributions of Dabob Bay to our community. This boundary expansion was approved by DNR in 2024.

These TLT applications are part of protecting areas within the existing and expanded boundary – and further ensuring the future viability of Jefferson County's shellfish industry.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

Sign drafted letter.

REVIEWED BY:


Josh Peters, County Administrator

Date 10/3/25



Board of County Commissioners
1820 Jefferson Street
PO Box 1220
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Heather Dudley-Nollette, District 1 Heidi Eisenhour, District 2 Greg Brotherton, District 3

October 6, 2025

Kenny Ocker
TLT Program Manager
MS 47014
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Mr. Ocker,

Jefferson County strongly supports DNR's 2025 Trust Land Transfer (TLT) proposals #1 and #2 to permanently preserve approximately 2,600 acres of timber trust lands that remain within the Dabob Bay Natural Area boundaries.

We appreciate that the TLT program enables DNR to purchase replacement land that generates long-term, sustainable revenue for junior taxing districts in counties while transferring lands with high ecological values but limited income-generating potential to owners who can manage them for public benefits, like DNR Natural Areas.

In 2024, DNR approved an expansion of the Dabob Bay Natural Area's boundaries from 7,735 acres to 11,200 acres to better protect the forests, streams, wetlands and fish and wildlife of the Dabob Bay ecosystem, including globally rare forest types.

The TLT proposals will allow DNR to transfer state lands within the boundary from commercial timber management, or even possible sale, to permanent protection as part of the Dabob Bay Natural Area. This transfer will help ensure long-term conservation of state lands, habitats, and water quality that are essential to the future of our communities and the critters that call this area home.

Sincerely,

JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Heather Dudley-Nollette
District 1

Heidi Eisenhour
District 2, Chair

Greg Brotherton
District 3