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MES Applicant

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Statement of Purpose

Why I Want to Pursue a Graduate Degree in Environmental Studies

We live in many interconnected environments: from the built environment of our cities to our indoor spaces, and to the natural world. As someone who has spent most of my life in Tacoma, I've come to realize how challenging it can be to escape the concrete jungle. As the years go by, it takes more and more miles and more time to find a place with trees, and clean air, and even longer to reach an area where the sounds of the city fade away. As I work on projects to make my city more livable or when I explore Tacoma's history, I become increasingly aware of the hidden environmental dangers that surround us. Evergreen has been teaching me about the policies that have allowed some of these dangers to persist.

Through my studies at Evergreen, I've come to understand that to protect my family, myself, and my community, I must understand the science behind these environmental issues on a deeper and more informed level. I must be a civic-minded change-maker, and advocate for policy changes at many levels. Whether through passive or more active lobbying, I must really understand what I'm up against and what I am truly fighting for, that is, I must understand the science behind the issues.

There is an elder that I have always felt a deep connection with. It is this incredible creature called the salmon and its relationship with the water, the trees, the forest, and

me. I try to capture the beauty and complexity of the salmon through word and paint. I want to learn how I can contribute to efforts aimed at saving the salmon, and to discover who and where I need to be involved in this fight.

Growing up, the sound of chainsaws was a familiar one, especially in the more rural areas around my grandparents' home in Auburn. Over the years, that sound became rarer, heard only in areas outside the city, once remote and forested. Now, when I hear a chainsaw, I am immediately put on alert. I want to know who is cutting down trees in my neighborhood and, more importantly, if they plan to replace them. This may sound trivial, but when I look out from my home toward the tide flats, I notice how few trees remain. The landscape has changed.

When I visit the forest, I have favorite routes that I take where the trees rise so high that you have to lean back to see the tops or brace yourself against something to keep your balance. However, more and more often, I come across areas that have been cleared all the way to the soil. The scene is disturbing because what was once a place where I felt connected and safe and had been a thriving ecosystem with trees, moss, ferns, and healthy soil, is now stripped bare and is no longer safe. In many cases, there's a sign warning that pesticides and fungicides have been spread across the area. The area is not only devoid of plant and animal life but is now also toxic to humans.

These experiences are only a few of the reasons why I am determined to pursue a graduate degree in environmental sciences. I hope to teach others about the environment, its beauty, its complexity, and the ways in which we can protect it. Whether as an industry consultant, policy writer, legislator, or educator, I aim to help others understand environmental issues and offer solutions to the challenges we face. My

long-term goal, after completing my master's, is to inspire the world to recognize the interconnectedness of all life and to correct what has been damaged.