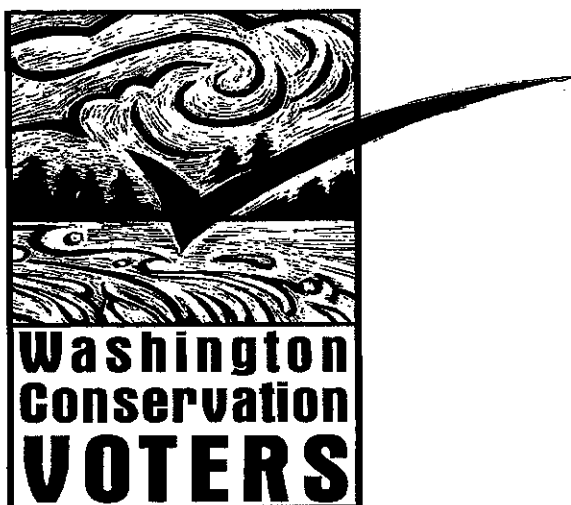


# Washington Conservation Voters



## Endorsement Policies And Procedures

**Amended March 1, 2007**

# Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Participation in Electoral or Judicial Races	2
Ballot Issues	2
• Statewide	2
• Regional / Cross-Jurisdictional	3
• Local	3
Endorsement Process	4
Endorsement Factors	6
Early Endorsements	7
Multiple Endorsements	8
Ratification of Local Chapter Endorsements	9
• Organizational Priority Races	11
• Local Priority Races	12
Voting Guidelines	13
• Quorum	
• Voting by Electronic Transmission	
• Proxy	
• Voting Requirements	
Judicial Races	14
• Statewide	15
• Regional / Cross-Jurisdictional	15
• Local	15

## **Washington Conservation Voters Endorsement Policies and Procedures**

Washington Conservation Voters (“WCV”) is a nonpartisan political action committee that works to elect and support environmentally responsible candidates for political and judicial office at the state and local level. Candidates, both challengers and incumbents, are evaluated for endorsement based on their environmental record, their commitment to environmental values, and the viability of their campaign.

Through these Endorsement Policies and Procedures, WCV endeavors to conduct an endorsement process that is fair, effective, and efficient. While we cannot hope to achieve consensus in every situation, WCV strives to provide consistency in our endorsements and to be adaptable to current and changing political circumstances. WCV believes that discussion and review of a broad spectrum of information will lead to the endorsement of the most environmentally responsible and viable candidate.

As WCV has grown, new electoral arenas and judicial races have been added to the strategic plan and political plan. In order to keep pace with a dynamic political process, WCV is committed to the development of a statewide common agenda including specific environmental priorities established on a yearly basis. These endorsement policies are designed to work in concert with the common agenda and the environmental priorities process.

WCV recognizes that its endorsement process is an educational opportunity for members of WCV and for candidates. It is an opportunity to educate candidates about current environmental issues, as well as an opportunity for WCV to learn more about local candidates and the communities that they serve or hope to serve.

These Endorsement Policies and Procedures are open to review by members of WCV, by the public, by incumbents, and by candidates, and WCV encourages their distribution. WCV believes that the open dissemination of these Endorsement Policies and Procedures allows members of WCV, candidates, incumbents, and other organizations to better understand how our endorsement decisions are made.

These Endorsement Policies and Procedures apply to the WCV State Board (“State Board”) and to each local chapter (“Local Chapter”) affiliated with WCV.

### **1.1 Participation in Electoral or Judicial Races**

WCV has discretionary authority to determine whether it will participate in an electoral or judicial race based on multiple factors, including but not limited to:

- Impact on environmental policy
- Development of political power
- Impact on the result of the race
- Strengthening the grassroots organization

### **1.2 Ballot Issues**

WCV may endorse, oppose, or take no action on a ballot issue. Ballot issues fall into three distinct categories: Statewide, Regional/Cross-Jurisdictional, and Local. Each category, and the ballot issues that fall within each, is governed by a separate process.

#### **A. Statewide**

Initiatives, referenda, and other petitions to the people or the Legislature that qualify for a statewide ballot will be handled by the State Board. To consider a statewide ballot issue for endorsement or active opposition, the State Board must determine that there is a compelling reason for participation based on the following factors:

- Statewide environmental impact
- High degree of consensus within the environmental community
- Usefulness as an organizing tool
- Available resources
- Political ramifications of WCV participation
- Position of Washington Environmental Council

If WCV participates in a statewide ballot issue, then the State Board will follow the endorsement process outlined in Section 1.3 and the voting guidelines outlined in Section 1.8. The State Board will strive to have pro and con presentations in contested initiatives where possible.

B. Regional/Cross-Jurisdictional

Initiatives, referenda, and other petitions to the people or a legislative body that qualify for a Regional or Cross-Jurisdictional ballot will be handled by the State Board. To consider an issue for endorsement or active opposition, the State Board must determine that there is a compelling reason for participation based on the following factors:

- Regional and/or Statewide environmental impact
- High degree of consensus within the environmental community
- Usefulness as an organizing tool
- Available resources
- Political ramifications of WCV participation
- Position of Washington Environmental Council

If WCV participates in a Regional or Cross-Jurisdictional Ballot Issue, then the State Board will follow the endorsement process outlined in Section 1.3 and the voting guidelines outlined in Section 1.8. The State Board will strive to have pro and con presentations in contested initiatives where possible.

Local Chapters affected by a Regional or Cross-Jurisdictional Ballot Issue will be invited to the pro and con presentations. The State Board, through the Executive Director and staff, will then solicit an advisory vote from the affected Local Chapters. The final endorsement decision will rest solely with the State Board.

C. Local

Initiatives, referenda and other petitions to the people or a legislative body that qualify for a Local Ballot will be handled by the affected Local Chapter. To consider the issue for endorsement or active opposition, the Local Chapter must determine that there is a compelling reason for participation based on the following factors:

- Local and/or statewide environmental impact
- High degree of consensus within the environmental community
- Usefulness as an organizing tool
- Available resources
- Political ramification of WCV participation

All Local Chapters will follow the endorsement process outlined in Section 1.3 and the voting guidelines outlined in Section 1.8. All Local Chapters will strive to have pro and con presentations in contested initiatives where possible.

The Local Chapter will submit any decision to endorse or oppose a local ballot issue to the State Board, which will then follow the ratification process outlined in Section 1.7. The Local Chapter does not need to submit a decision to take no action on a local ballot issue to the State Board, but should inform WCV's Political Director if a process takes place during which they evaluate a local ballot issue and decide to take no action.

For local ballot issues in counties and cities where there is no Local Chapter, an ad hoc local endorsement committee may be convened by the State Board to manage the endorsement process and make endorsement recommendations.

### **1.3 Endorsement Process**

The State Board may make endorsements in appropriate statewide electoral races. For example, the State Board makes endorsement decisions in the races for Governor, Attorney General, Public Lands Commissioner, and Supreme Court/Appellate Court Judges.

The State Board uses an oral interview and internal research process to assess the viability and environmental responsibility of candidates for statewide races. The interview may be waived when a candidate is clearly not viable or when an incumbent is eligible for an Early Endorsement (see Section 1.5). The State Board may also use a written questionnaire. The State Board will offer the same endorsement process to each viable candidate in a particular race.

Each Local Chapter makes endorsement recommendations regarding candidates within its jurisdiction, and those recommendations are then forwarded to the State Board or WCV Staff for ratification. For example, a Local Chapter makes endorsement decisions for mayors, city council members, county council members, state legislators, and judges running for office within its jurisdiction..

The Local Chapter uses an oral interview and internal research to assess the viability and environmental responsibility of candidates for a particular race. The interview may be waived when a candidate is clearly not viable or when an incumbent is eligible for an Early Endorsement (see Section 1.5). The Local Chapter may also use a written questionnaire. The Local Chapter will offer the same endorsement process to each viable candidate in a particular race.

Once a Local Chapter makes an endorsement, the endorsement is transmitted to the State Board or Executive Director for ratification (see Section 1.7). The decision by either the State Board or the Executive Director to ratify or remand an endorsement by a Local Chapter will be made as soon as possible, but no later than ten (10) business days of the Local Chapter transmitting the decision to the State Board for consideration.

Where electoral districts cross into different jurisdictions, WCV encourages cooperation between the Local Chapters. For example, Local Chapters should coordinate and participate in combined candidate interviews when possible. Additionally, Local Chapters should collaborate with each other on endorsement decisions. Neither the State Board nor the Executive Director will ratify an endorsement decision from a Local Chapter that is contradicted or opposed by a separate Local Chapter with jurisdictional authority.

Both the State Board and Local Chapters may create ad hoc committees to evaluate candidates, conduct interviews, and make recommendations regarding endorsements within their representative jurisdictions.

For electoral races in counties and cities where there is no Local Chapter, an ad hoc local endorsement committee may be convened by the State Board to manage the endorsement process and make endorsement recommendations.

The State Board and Local Chapters shall utilize and consult with WCV Staff where appropriate prior to making endorsement decisions.

#### **1.4 Endorsement Factors**

The following factors are to be evaluated by the State Board and Local Chapters in evaluating candidates and making endorsement decisions:

- ⊙ Candidate Background
  - Recruitment by or involvement with WCV
  - Voting record, including WCV Score Card Rating and substantive accomplishments
  - Position on Environmental Priorities
  - Demonstrated leadership and integrity on environmental issues
  - Potential for productive relationship building
  - Knowledge of statewide and local issues
  
- ⊙ Political Climate
  - Viability
  - Political implications for WCV from participation
  - Ability to impact the environmental balance of the jurisdiction
  - Political office to which the candidate is seeking election
  - Viability of the opponent
  - Resources WCV can provide to the candidate
  
- ⊙ Other
  - Degree of consensus within the environmental community
  - Usefulness as an organizing tool
  - Available resources
  - Impact on environmental policy

The following factors may not be considered in the endorsement process:

- Votes and/or positions on non-environmental issues
- Whether board members will vote for the endorsed candidate
- Party affiliation
- Personal or professional relationship or friendships with the candidate

An oral interview is used to assess approved factors for consideration, as well as to assess other information that is provided by the candidate (such as past reports, a current brochure or resume, and Public Disclosure Commission filings) or obtained by the State Board or Local Chapter. The interview may be waived when a candidate is clearly not viable or when an incumbent is eligible for Early Endorsement (see Section 1.5). A written questionnaire may also be used in addition to the oral interview.

In exceptional circumstances a written questionnaire may be used instead of an oral interview, such as in a race with de minimis political value or a race with an extraordinarily large number of candidates.

### **1.5 Early Endorsements**

An Early Endorsement may only be given to elected officials who: (1) have been previously endorsed by WCV; (2) have demonstrated a strong and consistent environmental ethic; and (3) have made substantial accomplishments on environmental issues. An Early Endorsement expedites the endorsement process and gives due recognition to an extraordinarily strong and capable elected official.

A decision to provide a candidate with an Early Endorsement will be based on the following factors:

- Previous endorsement by WCV
- Voting record, including WCV Scorecard Rating and substantive accomplishments
- Position on Environmental Priorities
- Strong campaign viability
- Potential impact on the race
- Demonstrated leadership and knowledge of environmental issues

- Strong environmental values, particularly if presented in a challenging political setting
- Recruitment by WCV
- Potential of other strong environmental candidates entering the race at a later date

An Early Endorsement must be accompanied by direct and substantive communication with the candidate. While encouraged, an oral interview is not required for an Early Endorsement.

An Early Endorsement is never automatic and does not preclude a dual endorsement at a later date. Any viable candidate, as determined by the State Board or Local Chapter, who enters a race where an Early Endorsement has already been conferred, may be offered an interview to determine if multiple endorsements are warranted (see Section 1.6).

## **1.6 Multiple Endorsements**

WCV endeavors to provide clear direction to the voting public through its endorsements, as well as the distribution of its political resources. In addition, WCV often seeks to influence the outcome of a race in the early stages. Therefore, WCV strongly discourages multiple endorsements in the same race.

However, there are certain circumstances where multiple endorsements in the same race may be warranted. A multiple endorsement decision will be based on consideration of the following factors:

- Whether the candidates have equally viable campaigns
- Whether the candidates have equally strong environmental values
- Whether the candidates have equally strong voting records on environmental issues
- Whether the candidates have equally strong reputation for leadership and knowledge of environmental issues
- Whether the candidates have been previously endorsed by WCV
- Whether there will be political implications to WCV from providing multiple endorsements
- Whether the candidates have previous involvement with WCV

- Whether there could be political implications by not providing multiple endorsements

Multiple endorsements may be made by the State Board and by Local Chapters. Local Chapters must submit all multiple endorsements to the State Board or WCV Staff for ratification (see Section 1.7).

### **1.7 Ratification of Local Chapter Endorsements**

Endorsement Ratification promotes a collaborative decision-making process between the State Board and Local Chapters. The ratification process will be conducted as follows:

1. During the first quarter of the year, each Local Chapter will work with WCV Staff to develop a list of potential races within its jurisdiction where it intends to make an endorsement. This collaborative process will involve analysis of the WCV Political Plan, including review of the current Environmental Priorities and a discussion of the voting records of particular candidates for office. The Political Director and/or the Lobbyist for WCV will participate in the collaborative process in order to ensure that Local Chapters are fully informed about all of the factors that need to be taken into account in each race.

The Endorsement List will be divided into two categories:

- (1) Races that have statewide significance and are therefore deemed an Organizational Priority Race; and
- (2) Races that have local significance only and are therefore deemed a Local Priority Race.

The Endorsement List prepared by Local Chapters with WCV Staff assistance will include a brief explanation of each race's environmental and political implication.

2. The Endorsement List from each Local Chapter shall be presented to the State Board Political Committee by the end of the first quarter of the year. The Political Committee shall review the Endorsement List, consult with WCV's lobbyist, and provide recommendations regarding the priority status of the races on the list.

3. The Endorsement List shall be returned to the Local Chapter to consider the Political Committee's recommendations, if any. The Local Chapter shall then adopt a final Endorsement List for that particular year.
  4. The final Endorsement List from the Local Chapter shall be delivered to the State Board's Political Committee. The Political Committee will either affirm the Endorsement List or remand it back to the Local Chapter. The Political Committee shall affirm or remand the Endorsement List with a majority vote. A remand vote should occur only when the Political Committee is concerned that aspects of the Endorsement List are inconsistent with the WCV statewide strategic plan or the WCV political plan. If a remand occurs, the process returns to Step 3, *infra*, for further consideration and collaboration between the Local Chapter, the Political Committee, and WCV Staff.
  5. The Endorsement List should be adaptable to dynamic political circumstances. Changes or amendments to the Endorsement List may occur on a continuous basis based on a continued collaborative process between the Local Chapter and WCV Staff. Any changes or amendments to an Endorsement List shall be communicated to the WCV Political Director and the Political Committee at the earliest possible time for review and affirmation. The Political Committee may remand proposed changes or amendments using the process described in Steps 3 & 4, *infra*.
  6. Once the Endorsement List is affirmed by the State Board's Political Committee, the endorsement process proceeds on two separate tracks: the **Organizational Priority Track** & the **Local Priority Track**. The Organizational Priority Track will be the default process for races that develop after the Endorsement List has been affirmed.
-

### **Organizational Priority Races**

Once a Local Chapter makes an endorsement, the Local Chapter or the WCV Field Organizer who works with that Local Chapter completes a Candidate Endorsement Fact Sheet. The Political Director or the WCV staff member designated by the Executive Director distributes this Fact Sheet by e-mail to the entire State Board.

The State Board will ratify Local Chapter endorsements that are consistent with the WCV statewide strategic plan, the political plan, and these endorsement policies and procedures.

The State Board may remand an endorsement to the Local Chapter for further consideration if: (1) the endorsement is not consistent with the WCV statewide strategic plan and/or political plan; (2) the State Board concludes that new or significant information that may not have been known to the Local Chapter warrants a reconsideration of the initial decision; or (3) the Local Chapter did not adhere to these endorsement policies and procedures.

In rare or exceptional circumstances, the State Board may refuse to ratify a Local Chapter endorsement. These circumstances include a determination by the State Board that a Local Chapter endorsement: (1) contravenes both the WCV statewide strategic plan and the political plan; or (2) is based on a decision-making process that fails to adhere to these endorsement policies and procedures; or (3) does not include adequate consideration of new or significant information.

Under these rare and exceptional circumstances, the State Board shall make the final endorsement decision in the race in question, which may be a decision not to endorse any candidate in a particular race. The State Board will take such action only if: (1) an endorsement recommendation has been remanded and then reaffirmed by the Local Chapter; (2) the State Board and Local Chapter have attempted to reconcile their differences through a joint meeting; and (3) the State Board votes by a 2/3 majority to make the final endorsement decision. As with all meetings of the State Board, Political Committee, and Local Chapters, discussions at a joint meeting between the State Board and Local Chapter will be internal confidential discussions and

must not be disseminated outside of WCV Staff, the Local Chapter, and the State Board.

The State Board shall vote on Local Chapter endorsements within ten (10) business days of receiving the recommendation from the Chapter. Voting may be by phone or email, with the Political Director or highest ranking WCV Staff member coordinating the voting process.

The Political Director shall forward the results of the vote to the State Board and to the appropriate Field Organizer, who then informs the Local Chapter at the earliest possible time.

---

### **Local Priority Races**

Once a Local Chapter makes an endorsement, a Local Chapter member or Field Organizer shall complete a Candidate Endorsement Fact Sheet. The Political Director or highest ranking WCV Staff member shall e-mail the Fact Sheet to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will generally ratify Local Chapter endorsements in Local Priority Races. In rare circumstances where the Executive Director determines that the endorsement decision has statewide significance, the Executive Director shall refer the decision to the State Board for ratification. As appropriate or necessary, the Executive Director may confer with the Political Committee of the State Board on endorsement matters.

The Political Director or the WCV staff member designated by the Executive Director shall obtain the Executive Director's decision within ten (10) business days and forward the results to the State Board and to the Field Organizer, who then informs the Local Chapter.

## 1.8 Voting Guidelines

### ⊙ Quorum

For the purposes of voting on endorsements at an actual or telephonic meeting, a quorum is defined as one over 50% of the voting members of the State Board or Local Chapter.

### ⊙ Voting by Electronic Transmission

For the purposes of voting on endorsements via electronic transmission, 100% participation and approval of all eligible voting members of the State Board or Local Chapter is required.

### ⊙ Proxy

For the purposes of endorsement voting, proxy votes are not allowed. All State Board and Local Chapter members must cast their own vote and cannot have other persons vote for them.

### ⊙ Voting Requirements

#### ○ State Board Endorsements

A majority vote of those eligible State Board members present at an actual or telephonic meeting is required to confer an endorsement.

#### ○ Organizational Priority Candidate Endorsements – Local Chapter

A majority vote of those eligible Local Chapter members present at an actual or telephonic meeting is required to confer an endorsement.

- Local Priority Candidate Endorsements – Local Chapter

A majority vote of those eligible Local Chapter members present at an actual or telephonic meeting is required to confer an endorsement.

- Statewide Ballot Issues and Regional / Cross-Jurisdictional Ballot Issues

A vote of 60% of those eligible State Board members present at an actual or telephonic meeting is required to confer an endorsement.

- Local Ballot Issues

A vote of 60% of those eligible Local Chapter members present at an actual or telephonic meeting is required to confer an endorsement.

A Local Chapter may adopt and utilize more stringent Voting Requirements than those set forth in Section 1.8, but a Local Chapter may not adopt or utilize less stringent Voting Requirements than those set forth in Section 1.8.

For purposes of Section 1.8, a determination of “eligible” State Board members or Local Chapter members depends on the application of the WCV Conflict of Interest Guidelines and/or any Conflict of Interest Policy adopted by a Local Chapter.

## **1.9 Judicial Races**

Judges render decisions that have significant impact on environmental policy. While Judicial Races are considered to be nonpartisan, and while judicial candidates are not supposed to state an established predisposition towards a particular legal issue, a judicial candidate’s environmental values are a valid consideration in evaluating his/her qualifications.

WCV may endorse, oppose, or take no action on a Judicial Race. Judicial Races fall into three distinct categories: Statewide, Regional/Cross-Jurisdictional, and Local. Each category is governed by a separate process.

A. Statewide

Statewide Judicial Races will be handled by the State Board.  
Statewide Judicial Races include the Washington Supreme Court.

If WCV participates in a Statewide Judicial Race, then the State Board will follow the endorsement process outlined in Section 1.3 and the voting guidelines outlined in Section 1.8.

B. Regional / Cross-Jurisdictional

Regional or Cross-Jurisdictional Judicial Races will be handled by the State Board. Regional and Cross-Jurisdictional Races include the Washington State Court of Appeals.

If WCV participates in a Regional or Cross-Jurisdictional Judicial Race, then the State Board will follow the endorsement process outlined in Section 1.3 and the voting guidelines outlined in Section 1.8. The State Board, through the Executive Director and Staff, will solicit an advisory vote from the affected Local Chapters. The final endorsement decision will rest solely with the State Board.

C. Local

Local Judicial Races will be handled by the affected Local Chapter.  
Local Judicial Races include Superior Court Judges.

The Local Chapter will follow the endorsement process outlined in Section 1.3 and the voting guidelines outlined in Section 1.8. The Local Chapter will submit any decision to endorse or oppose a Local Judicial candidate to the State Board, which will then follow the ratification process outlined in Section 1.7. The State Board may ratify, remand, or take no action on the endorsement recommendation by the Local Chapter.

The Local Chapter does not need to submit a decision to take no action on a Local Judicial Race to the State Board, but should inform WCV's Political Director if a process takes place during which they evaluate a Local Judicial Race and decide to take no action.

The State Board and Local Chapters are encouraged to consider any relevant information provided by the Washington State Bar Association – Judicial Recommendation Committee prior to making an endorsement recommendation in a Judicial Race.