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Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Five Things to Know for February 12, 2026

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Five Things To Know

1. HB 2499: CD Elections Bill

The bill of WACD's primary focus in 2026, [HB 2499](#) did not get a vote in the House Appropriations Committee before Monday's legislative cut-off. That means the bill's progress has stopped for the remainder of the session and is not moving forward this year.

Whether it was [the testimony](#) given by districts, that other bills were a higher priority to the committee, the bill sponsor did not want to allow any potential amendments, or an unknown reason, the conversation about elections will continue for at least another year.

WACD remains committed to seeing the recommendations of the [Joint Committee on Elections](#), and the time and effort of many districts, be implemented so this issue can finally

settle. We know there is a path forward that means success for all 45 conservation districts.

2. HB 2154: Ag Lands Bill

The other bill in the top tier of WACD's focus in 2026, [HB 2154](#) did not get a vote in the House Local Government Committee before the first legislative cut-off on February 4th. That means the bill's progress has stopped for the remainder of the session.

Several districts who attended Legislative Day were able to speak with the bill sponsor and reiterating that the topic of farmland preservation in Washington State was too important to let one specific set of circumstances remove this potential tool from every conservation district's toolbox. There will be additional follow-up during the interim.

3. WACD Budget Priorities

In the compact timelines of a short legislative session, priorities and focus can shift quickly. Transition can be jarring, we know that shifting from policy to budget priorities seems like a hard turn. But a hard turn is forthcoming and we want to ensure districts are aware.

The supplemental operating and capital budget proposals from the House and Senate will be released sometime early on in the week of February 23 - 27. When they do, there will be a push to get budgets through the committee process and voted out of their respective chamber quickly. We don't know what the legislative budgets will say, but we do know the Governor's budget from December proposed a \$676,000 cut to technical services to conservation district. That would mean a \$15,000 reduction to each district.

So be ready to respond if a cut to district operations is proposed. WACD will seek continued [full funding](#) of the Conservation Commission's budget, as well as other programs that districts utilize. Beyond base line funding there is still hope that the [supplemental budget requests](#) as well as increased [Forest Health & Community Wildfire Resiliency funding](#) can be achieved

4. Plants, Plants, Plants!

WACD's Plant Materials Center still has a plethora of big beefy beautiful bare-root plants [available for purchase!](#) When you purchase plants from the WACD Plant Materials Center, you're doing more than sourcing high-quality, conservation-grade native plants—you're investing directly in the work of WACD for every conservation district in Washington.

Our native plants support restoration and enhancement projects across the region, and every plant sold helps fund the operation of WACD and the services we provide to conservation districts statewide.

If you do not need plants please consider **forwarding this newsletter** to partners who may.

Choose native. Support conservation. Buy from WACD.

5. Area Director Vacancies ~ NE, SE, and SW

There are currently three area director vacancies on the WACD State Board of Directors: in the Northeast Area, in the Southeast Area, and in the Southwest Area. The WACD board oversees the actions of your state association, the activities of its staff, and the operations of the WACD Plant Materials Center. The WACD Board meets once a month through Zoom, from 6:00 – 8:30 PM on the 3rd Monday of each month.

If you are a supervisor in one of these areas feeling compelled to represent your area, or want to start engaging on statewide activities, please apply. If you have questions or would like to put your name forward for consideration in any of these areas, please contact Ryan Baye at rbye@wadistricts.org

Upcoming Events

2026

- February 15 - 19: [NACD Annual Meeting](#)
- February 19: [State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting](#)
- February 23: [WACD Board of Directors Meeting](#)

Inside WACD

WACD Legislative Day

Thank you to everyone who participated in Legislative Day this year, either in Olympia or virtually. We could not do literally any of our work without you and the credibility you have built in your communities.

As WACD staff slows down long enough to try to catch a breath before the next burst of legislative activity, don't forget take a break yourselves.

We'd like to hear from you

People make Washington's conservation delivery system work. Whether it is people you work with, people you serve, or the statewide community of conservation districts, success is built on working with people. Success is built on you.

As always, we'd like to receive your ideas and questions. Please contact us at oly@wacd.org.
Emails sent to that address reach the entire Executive Office team!

Always yours for conservation,



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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