

# WACD 2026 Legislative Priorities



## Invest in Proven Conservation Delivery Support the SCC's Supplemental Budget Request

### Conservation Technical Assistance ~ \$2,250,000



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Supports voluntary conservation on over 50% of Washington's privately owned land by equipping conservation districts to provide project design, permitting support, and financial assistance. This investment accelerates salmon recovery and leverages \$100+ million in federal Farm Bill funding into Washington communities.

### Forest Health & Community Wildfire Resiliency ~ \$2,500,000



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Reduces wildfire risk by working directly with private forestland owners and homeowners, including those near 951,000 homes in the Wildland-Urban Interface. Conservation districts deliver incentive-based technical and financial assistance to improve forest health and protect communities.

### Business & Technology Transformation ~ \$3,200,000



Modernizes outdated systems that currently delay conservation projects. This investment reduces inefficiencies, speeds project delivery, and ensures conservation dollars translate into timely, on-the-ground results statewide.



## Bill Priorities

### **Conservation District Elections - Oppose HB 2499**

- We support conservation districts having the option to follow the general election process in RCW 29A or continue holding their elections under RCW 89.08.
  - We do not support the requirement for CD's to hold a primary election, which creates an inequitable and unnecessary financial burden. Districts do not have taxing or levy authority, and most cannot afford the cost of general ballot elections.
- Current law ensures conservation districts retain practical, working-lands expertise by requiring 3 out of 5 supervisors to be landowners or farm operators.
  - We are open to discussing an experience-based qualification as a more equitable alternative.
- We are concerned about requiring F-1 financial disclosure forms for conservation district supervisors who are unpaid volunteers serving their local communities.
  - Many family farms operate niche or specialized businesses where public financial disclosure increases their risk from competitors.
  - These requirements would significantly discourage participation and result in fewer qualified supervisors statewide, as well as impair the recruitment of new supervisors.

### **Protecting Agriculture - Support SB 6104**

Support legislation recognizing the cumulative impacts of state and local policies on agriculture.

### **Rangeland Fire Protection District Pilot - Support HB 1048**

Support establishing rangeland fire protection districts and expanding wildfire prevention and response on unprotected lands.

### **1168 Funding (Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience Account) – Support SB 5893**

DNR and conservation districts partner with landowners to reduce wildfire risk, restore forests, and strengthen community resilience through locally driven, on-the-ground solutions. The 2023 Joint Workgroup endorsed a direct investment from the 1168 Account to the State Conservation Commission.

**We support SB 5893 and request a proviso providing a \$2.5 million direct appropriation to the Commission in FY 27 to sustain this essential work.**

