



# Washington Association of Conservation Districts

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Thank you for supporting conservation districts, the State Conservation Commission, and voluntary conservation in developing the FY25 Supplemental Operating and Capital Budgets this session. As you approach this final step of reconciliation, the Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) wishes to share our priorities for your consideration as you negotiate budget differences.

We support the \$3.5 million for Conservation Technical Assistance in the House version of the Supplemental Operating Budget. This is a statewide priority, for there are more than 3,000 outstanding district service requests and more than 1,000 farm and forest conservation plans waiting for available conservation district personnel and resources. An investment in conservation districts will create significant dividends as we continue to address our natural resource issues.

Conservation districts are staffed by dedicated, highly trained natural resource professionals whose commitment to community well-being and ecosystem health has a long history of garnering support and trust from the communities we serve. To accomplish the volume and quality of work needed, we are dependent on the funding we receive from the state Legislature. Given that most of Washington's diverse natural resources are either on or contiguous with privately owned land, the work of the conservation districts and the State Conservation Commission are critical to achieving the state's conservation objectives.

WACD also prefers the House version of the FY25 Supplemental Operating Budget with its amount of \$600,000 for the administrative operational needs of the State Conservation Commission. With the Legislature's nearly \$100 million in new conservation natural resource investments in 23-25 biennium, the Conservation Commission must be able to provide additional resources to be responsive to conservation districts, landowners, and local communities. The SCC is the state partner for Washington's conservation districts; the agency's ability to provide financial and operational support and oversight are crucial components in successful conservation district operations and outcomes.

With these investments, conservation districts may finally be able to reduce the backlog of requests for district services and expand programs to better conserve our state's natural resources.

Very sincerely,

Tom Salzer  
Executive Director