

LWV OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY

Position on

PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports the work done by the Pierce Conservation District.

Public awareness of its work could be achieved through:

- Increased publicity in the media;
- Publicity by Conservation District grant recipients;
- Increased presence at farmers' markets, fairs, and other public events;
- Community organizations, environmental organizations, and schools helping to spread awareness.

The best way to increase awareness of the Pierce Conservation District would be to have their elections for Supervisor on the general election ballot, which would give it publicity, put candidates in the voters' guides, and get the candidates invited to participate in candidate forums.

The Election/Selection Process:

The election process of conservation districts is governed by RCW89.08.190, and by Guidelines of the Washington State Conservation Commission. Under the current system, elections of Supervisors are not included with any other election, nor is the election run by the Auditor. The effect is to have very few people participating in the elections.

We believe that, in the interests of democracy and citizen participation in government, the selection process needs to change. We could support an election system or an appointment system. In either system, the size of the Board of Supervisors should increase to the same number as the number of County Council districts, and a Supervisor would be selected or elected to represent each district.

The needs and concerns of each district are not the same. District representation could help ensure that the various conservation needs of the district are known and met.

Election System:

If we retain an election system, candidates would only have to campaign to represent one district, rather than having to run campaigns for the entire county. Elections should be held in November, be run by the Auditor, and appear on the general election ballot.

Positions should be nonpartisan.

Terms should be staggered so that there is continuity on the Board of Supervisors, and so that elections do not have to be held every year.

Appointment System:

A system for appointing the Board of Supervisors would save the money which is spent running elections, but runs risks of political appointments.

The Board of Supervisors would be appointed by the County Council.

As with our election system recommendation, terms should be staggered to ensure continuity.

Adopted May 2008