



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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October 22, 2009

Submitted to OFM, Resource Reform

Greetings All Managers, All Supervisors, WSCC Board & Staff and CD Staff,

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) has the following comments on the ideas for Natural Resource Reorganization to meet the following criteria:

Resources Subcabinet established three criteria to be used to evaluate reform ideas. Any proposed changes must:

1. Improve customer service.
2. Increase efficiencies (improve productivity, reduce costs).
3. Advance the state's commitment to:
 - Protect and restore natural resources and the environment.
 - Work collaboratively on natural resource issues with state's tribal governments.
 - Promote sustainable commercial and recreational use of natural resources.
 - Protect public health.

Washington Association of Conservation Districts Comments:

1. Conservation Commission needs to remain an independent agency

The Washington Association of Conservation Districts (WACD) feels that the **State Conservation Commission needs to remain an independent agency** to effectively assist the 47 Conservation Districts in Washington State. Inclusion into any of the regulatory agencies would polarize opinions of constituents and interest groups as to the unbiased, non-regulatory ability of each of the local Conservation Districts. The financial / technical assistance and oversight that each Conservation District receives from the Conservation Commission is crucial for each district to implement their locally developed and delivered incentive programs and needs to remain without a perceived regulatory directive.

2. Don't reorganize agencies at this time.

WACD recognizes the need for effective and efficient operations in State Government to deal with the State's budget challenges. However, we find the ideas to reorganize agencies at this time to be **lacking in true efficiency gains** and feel the **disruption to customer service would be significant**.

3. Improve the Natural Resource Cabinet and agency coordination and collaboration, as in ideas 1.6 and 1.8, on key topics:

- a) Review land management functions by all agencies.
- b) Develop common agency region lines and coordinate work in the region.
- c) Improve grant coordination.
- d) Include the University of Washington and Washington State University Extension in Natural Resource Cabinet.

WACD does see potential increases in effectiveness and efficiencies in idea 1.8, Formalize Multi-Agency Collaboration. The idea has merit and should be the standard for agency operation.

4. Support the Incentives Service Delivery Proposal in idea 3.5.

WACD sees real potential for efficiency gains in delivery of landowner incentive programs through this proposal. The 47 Conservation Districts in Washington State have a proven reputation of being able to work effectively and efficiently in their local communities. The State Conservation Commission has representation of agencies on the board and collaboration is already a built-in component to assist the local Conservation Districts in targeting service delivery to private landowners. **This proposal has action and accountability throughout and should be implemented.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

John M Larson

John Larson, Executive Director

Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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