Your Name, Title

Your Address

Email; Phone

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee   
Office of the Governor

PO Box 40002  
Olympia, Washington 98504

Dear Governor Inslee,

As the \_\_District Manager\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_\_Example\_\_\_\_\_ Conservation District, I am writing to express our district’s full support for the Washington State Conservation Commission’s (SCC) 2021-2023 Biennium Budget. Washington’s conservation districts, with institutional backing from the SCC, play a vital role in enhancing and protecting the state’s natural resources. Significant investments in the SCC and our state’s 45 local conservation districts are needed right now to ensure our collective efforts to improve water quality, create wildfire resiliency spaces, restore and protect critical habitat, meet the growing demand for services related to food security, and enhance soil and forest heath are successful.

The SCC’s 2021-2023 Operating and Capital Budget request reflects the need for comprehensive investments in Washington’s approach to natural resources conservation in partnership in voluntary partnership with landowners, multiple levels of government agencies, and non-government organizations. This request ensures the state has the capacity to continue supporting local community efforts and to fully engage private landowners in reaching the state’s natural resource goals. The SCC budget request for the **Conservation Technical Assistance** program is particularly important in helping the state achieve its conservation goals.

Full funding for the **Conservation Technical Assistance** decision package will help provide an adequate foundation of state funding for each conservation district to meet expanding demand for incentive-based conservation programs. With over 50% of Washington’s lands privately-owned, there is a need to provide the technical assistance to landowners and land managers. Additionally, the **Voluntary Stewardship Program** serves to implement the activity necessary under the Growth Management Act to protect critical habitat without discouraging local food or fiber producers.

In (insert CD name) our technical assistance has resulted in…examples of strengthened/new relationships with other with non-profits, tribes, the business sector, commodity groups, local governments; specific programs or projects achieved; measurable conservation results….

While operating funds are critical to our work, (insert CD name) would like to highlight the capital funds that are also critical to achieving our state’s conservation goals. Our priorities are funding for **Natural Resource Investments** that provide the financial incentives for wide-spread adoption of best management practices; **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** Riparian Funding in support of the state’s Salmon Recovery efforts; **Shellfish Funding** as a necessary mechanism to upgrade and/or protect shellfish harvest areas; and state match for the **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** which incentivizes innovation and allows Washington state to leverage much needed federal Farm Bill dollars at a rate of $5.50 for $1 of state funding.

(Similar to CTA example above, select one of the program areas and tell a story of how the money was used, leveraged, partnerships created and conservation goals achieved)

Our partnership with the SCC has allowed us to build the technical and programmatic expertise necessary to effectively respond to the natural resource challenges within our district. Over the last decade, conservation districts have been responsible for converting 108,000 of farmland in the Spokane River watershed to more sustainable management practices through one RCPP program, saved 17,504 acres feet of water through the Irrigation Efficiency Program, and providing Firewise information to over 140,000 landowners across the state, just to name a few successes.

Please accept our sincere thanks and appreciate for your commitment to conservation. We look forward to working collaboratively with your office and the Legislature in the coming months to help secure funding support for our shared vision of a healthy, resilient state.

Sincerely,

Name, Title

Organization

cc: Tom Salzer, WACD Executive Director

Carol Smith, SCC Executive Director

Jim Cahill, OFM Senior Budget Analyst

Leslie Connelly, OFM Budget Analyst

Myra Baldini, OFM Capital Budget Analyst

Jen Masterson, OFM Capital Budget Analyst