

# King County Democrats 2024 Endorsement Questionnaire

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<b>What type of position are you running for?</b>
State Executive
<b>What position are you running for?</b>
Commissioner of Public Lands
<b>Are you a Democrat?</b>
Yes

### Have you ever been a member of another political party?

No

### Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers?

Yes

### What are your top three policy priorities?

Our climate crisis and social injustice requires a fierce urgency of action. DNR needs transformational change. This requires us to approach this work with bold policy ideas and a deep commitment to environmental justice and tribal sovereignty. That's what my campaign is about. That's why I'm running. My priorities will be to deliver this transformational change with a sense of urgency to protect our climate and natural environment and to advance equity and social justice.

My top three priorities will be to (1) protect our clean air, clean water and habitat— including ending the destruction of our mature legacy forests; (2) improve wildfire prevention and response; and (3) expand recreational opportunities on state lands (particularly for those who have not historically had those opportunities). Environmental justice and tribal sovereignty need to be institutionalized into all of the work of the department and the implementation of these priorities.

I bring not only strong environmental values, but also the relevant background, experience and record of accomplishments to be effective to put those values into action and implement these priorities.

### Climate change has increased the portion of the year at high-risk for wildfires from three months to nearly six months. Outside of the requirements of HB1578, passed in 2023, how will you approach wildfire control and prevention?

Wildfire prevention must be a top priority for public safety and public health. The smoke we've experienced from recent wildfires creates health risks— disproportionately on marginalized community members.

Our emphasis needs to be upstream on prevention— on prescribed burns and non-commercial thinning to manage wildfire prevention and also forest health. This means addressing barriers to local training and support—including increased dedicated funding & capacity as well as implementing effectiveness monitoring of impacts of different forest health treatments.

I'll also work with local governments to improve land use plans and building codes in wildland urban interface areas to better tailor our management to the local circumstances.

Ecological and community resilience go hand-in-hand. We need to stabilize funding for community-based grants to local partners working on community resilience efforts and convene community partners to co-create a more robust, developed and responsive long-term model.

Ultimately, I am going to support the DNR fire chief and use my state legislative experience to fight to get them the resources and technology they need to do their job.

### How will you build and strengthen relationships with other departments to ensure that Washington is taking a comprehensive, sustainable approach to preserving our natural resources?

The urgency and complexity of the issues requires close collaboration. Serving as Lands Commissioner will be the culmination of a career focused on environment & natural resource issues. As Chair of the House Select Committee on Puget Sound, I worked with all state and local natural resource agencies to create the Puget Sound Partnership. As Chair of the House Environment Committee, I continued my close work with natural resource agencies. My experience & familiarity with the departments & issues, as well as my existing relationships, will be valuable in laying the foundation for productive collaboration. I'll hit the ground running.

DNR also works closely with LOCAL governments— particularly counties. My decade in county government and knowledge of county governments will also be an asset in working with local governments.

Specifically, I will make sure roles and responsibilities of DNR relative to other departments are crystal clear. Where there is overlap or uncertainty, I will convene respective leaders. Where other departments and agencies are the lead, I will ensure we fulfill our responsibilities (for example, our responsibilities under the Puget Sound Action Agenda).

### How will you prioritize addressing pollution?

While DNR is primarily a land-management agency, it has a big role to play in reducing the pollution contributing to climate change. Pacific NW forests are some of the greatest carbon sinks in the world. Our State Supreme Court, in Conservation NW vs. Franz, gave us the opportunity to make transformational changes to our forestry practices in order to store more carbon.

This means we should set ambitious carbon storage and sequestration goals for the next sustainable harvest calculation. It means preserving our mature legacy forests. These older, naturally regenerated (not tree farms), structurally diverse forests store the most carbon and have the most biodiversity. They comprise only 3% of our state-owned timberlands but have an outsize impact on climate. On my first day as Land Commissioner I will sign a mature forest policy that ends the destruction of our mature legacy forests.

It means instituting honest carbon accounting as part of the analysis of proposed timber sales. The timber industry telling

us that clearcutting older forests is good for the climate is just like when the tobacco industry told us that smoking cigarettes was good for our health. It's bullshit.

**We value understanding of, respect for, and maintenance of Tribal rights and treaties. How will you coordinate with our state's Tribes and collaborate towards the restoration and preservation of our natural environment?**

I'll approach my relationship with the tribes with respect. I will honor and respect tribal treaty rights and strengthen the co-management role of tribes.

But this is not just a legal issue. We have a moral responsibility to not turn away from the genocidal legacy of our colonization, the intergenerational pain and the racism that continues today. If we value human rights, then free prior informed consent needs to be our aspiration. My work as commissioner and relationship with tribes will move us in that direction.

Institutionalization of tribal needs throughout the agency is more important than simply having a liaison. The key is robust communication and EARLY consultation. Consultation can't just be lip service or checking a box. We need to be engaging more in genuinely joint planning efforts. For example, one early priority is to work with tribes on a long-term strategic plan for use of public lands for clean energy development. We need to protect sacred spaces while meeting our clean energy goals.

A respectful relationship also means looking for those opportunities to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices into the conservation work at DNR.

**What opportunities do you see as the Commissioner of Public Lands to pursue environmental justice for communities harmed by historical practices?**

My mission will be to incorporate equity & social justice into all of our operations and programs.

I'll hire the most diverse staff in the history of the agency, lead the charge for structural changes at the Board of Natural Resources to make it more inclusive, and will honor tribal treaty rights and strengthen the co-management role of tribes. I'll make an effort to ensure the nearly 100 commissions, task forces & advisory committees at DNR reflect the diversity of the state— and that we listen to them. I'll work with women and minority owned businesses to identify and eliminate barriers to contracting with DNR.

And I'll make transformational changes in the way DNR engages with and empowers the community- shifting resources into the regions for authentic community engagement. Local staff has the relationships and builds community trust. Let's empower them to create the spaces and processes for authentic co-creation of programs and the up-front early engagement we know is most meaningful.

I also plan to go beyond the requirements of the HEAL Act and conduct environmental justice assessments on key agency actions—including some of the MANY at DNR that are currently exempt.

**CERTIFICATION: The candidate hereby certifies that, to the best of their knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.**

Yes