

## 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

### Candidate Information

Candidate Name: Karen Porterfield

Office sought: Commissioner of Public lands

Mailing address: 119 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, Suite 320, Seattle WA 98104

Phone: 206.790.9225

Email: Karen@karenporterfield.com

Campaign Manager Name: Alexis Hujar

Consultant(s): Blue Wave and FDR Services

Website: karenporterfield.com

Facebook: facebook.com/porterfieldkm

Have you read the 46<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats Draft 2016 Platform? Yes  , No \_\_\_\_\_  
(Go to [http://www.46dems.org/2016\\_ld\\_caucus](http://www.46dems.org/2016_ld_caucus) and click "Draft Platform")

Why are you running for this office?

The Pacific NW is one of the most beautiful places in the world. We cherish the outdoors and it is critical that we preserve our magnificent lands for generations to come. During the last sixteen years of management of this agency we have seen a significant decline in revenue, almost two thirds in real dollars. With the legislature currently working on how to fund and hire the additional teachers needed based on the McCleary decision we have not yet started on the process of how to pay for the additional classrooms and facilities that these teachers will need. I feel that at this point passionate leadership and strong management will be critical to the success of DNR and meeting the responsibilities of generating revenue to support education.. That is why I am running.

I am running for Commissioner of Public Lands because I also feel that this is the state organization that will see the most change in how they do business in the next ten years. My work experience and educational experience make me the most qualified candidate at this point in time for what this agency needs. This summer I will be climbing Mount Rainer for the first time and believe that we need to ensure that every resident in our state has access to our natural environment.

Please briefly describe your qualifications for this office and your personal and professional background.

I have over twenty-five years of management experience in guiding businesses and public center entities to develop creative solutions to complex problems. I am currently an Adjunct Professor in the Institute of Public Service in the Masters of Public Administration teaching advanced management practices to graduate students at Seattle University. During this last year I had the opportunity to be a part of working to preserve additional acreage for East Cougar Mountain and supporting King County Parks. I

am also a lifelong resident of Washington State who cares about our community and the environment that we live in.

Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Have you ever been a member of another party? Have you been actively involved with the Democratic Party?

I am a lifelong Democrat and member of the SEIU union. My background includes being a small business owner, a management consultant and a long time faculty member in the Masters of Public Administration at Seattle University.

I grew up in a democratic family where my father was district chair in the 35, 11 and 37<sup>th</sup> districts. I started doorbelling with my dad when I was five, and growing up participated in many campaigns. I have attended county caucuses as a delegate and have also been a state delegate. I have supported local candidates with both volunteer time and donations, and in 2012 I was the democratic candidate for the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, running against Dave Reichert. I am a supporting member of the 5<sup>th</sup> LD, my home district.

I worked for the Salvation Army for 13 years with a focus on rural family services, affordable housing development, government relations and fund development. Currently I serve as the volunteer VP of the Bellevue College Foundation Board with a focus on raising scholarship money for first generation students.

What's your plan to win?

My campaign has identified the top eleven counties in the state that contains 80% of the votes. We will be focusing a majority of our efforts on those eleven counties. Once filing week is completed we will be doing our voter projections. We will be using social media, editorial endorsements, local community endorsements, union and legislative district endorsements and radio. This summer I will be focused full time on meeting the voters and campaigning to win.

What do you see as the most important functions of the position you are running for? What qualities do you possess that make you the candidate best suited to this role?

This is an exciting time for DNR with major changes happening with this election. The Commissioner of Public Lands is an executive role, not a legislative role. Passionate leadership and good management are not "sexy" but I am excited to bring my vision, plan, experience and knowledge to this department. DNR has seen significant turnover and early retirement in the last several years due to unhappy and disengaged employees. . I have read the employee feedback from one of the last employee survey that highlights the unhappiness and lack of faith in the current management structure. This agency has been managed in a 1980's "command and control" structure and I want to build a new. 21<sup>st</sup> century culture of "trust and respect" that will help DNR meet its revenue responsibilities.

I have more than twenty five years of executive leadership and management experience and for the last 15 years have also taught at Seattle University in their Masters of Public Administration program. My teaching includes Strategic Planning and Change Management, Lean, Project Management, Adaptive Leadership in the Workplace and HR for Line Managers. I bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to an agency that needs to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

1. Generating more revenue to support education.
2. Developing a 21<sup>st</sup> century revenue portfolio that includes wind and solar energy, market rate land leases, and expanded contracts for shellfish and geoducks. DNR needs to also explore participation in the carbon market for trees that have been set aside for species preservation and stream buffers. Cutting down more trees is not the answer.
3. To repair 100 years of bad decision making and making our beaches and forests healthy again, not just maintaining them at current levels.

How will you support women and families' economic opportunities? Would you support legislation closing the wage gap, funding childcare options, and requiring paid family leave?

I am and always have been an advocate for equal opportunities for women and providing living wage job so that families can thrive. I believe that education plan an important role in economic stability, and that DNR needs to do more so that those children in our most disadvantaged communities have the resources they need to thrive in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. I would whole heartedly support legislation that would close the wage gap, funding childcare options, and requiring paid family leave.

How will you work to address racial equity?

By making it a priority during all hiring process. I also plan to explore the opportunity to provide internship opportunities with local community colleges and universities that would allow students the experience of working in DNR. This will help increase our pool of interested candidates for future hires.

Describe your stance on Washington's tax structure. What needs to be changed? What should stay the same?

n/a

Are there issues that you've worked on or are excited to work on that are not receiving much media attention?

This is an exciting time for DNR with major changes happening with this election. The Commissioner of Public Lands is an executive role, not a legislative role. Passionate leadership and good management are

not “sexy” but I am excited to bring my vision, plan, experience and knowledge to this department. DNR has seen significant turnover and early retirement in the last several years due to unhappy and disengaged employees. . I have read the employee feedback from one of the last employee survey that highlights the unhappiness and lack of faith in the current management structure. This agency has been managed in a 1980’s “command and control” structure and I want to build a new. 21<sup>st</sup> century culture of “trust and respect” that will help DNR meet its revenue responsibilities.

I have more than twenty five years of executive leadership and management experience and for the last 15 years have also taught at Seattle University in their Masters of Public Administration program. My teaching includes Strategic Planning and Change Management, Lean, Project Management, Adaptive Leadership in the Workplace and HR for Line Managers. I bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to an agency that needs to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

How will you combat climate change?

By pursuing opportunities to participate in the carbon market for trees that DNR has/will set aside for species preservation, stream buffers and recreational purposes; and by exploring opportunities to participate in the wind and solar energy market.

Question	Support	Oppose	Qualify, if needed
Do you support or oppose Raise up Washington’s initiative to increase the minimum wage?	X		
Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion?	X		
Do you support or oppose amending Washington’s Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue?		X	
Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State’s ports?		X	
Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	X		
Do you support or	X		

oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?			
Do you support automatic voter registration?	X		
Do you support or oppose the death penalty?		X	
Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications?	X		
Do you support or oppose legislation to fix Washington's "three strikes" law?	X		

The following questions are position specific. You only need to complete the questions for the position that you're running for.

**Superintendent of Public Instruction**

How will you work to address the achievement gap in our public school

Please describe your position on standardized testing.

Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?

**Secretary of State**

How will you work to increase voter enfranchisement?

**Legislature (House and Senate), Governor, Lt Governor**

Given the *McCleary* decision, what legislation do you support or propose to fully fund education and maintain funding for other basic services? Do you support increasing revenue? Given existing public needs and the state of the economy, should such legislation include increasing revenue?

Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?

#### **Lt Governor**

How would you use your office to promote international economic development that benefits our state?

When the Governor is out of state or otherwise incapacitated, the Lt. Governor becomes the acting Governor. How would you handle that responsibility? What kind of actions would you take?

#### **Commissioner of Public Lands**

In 2015, Washington faced the largest and most destructive forest fires in history. What will you do as Lands Commissioner to prevent or respond to wildfires?

The Forest Service has recommended that the state of Washington allow “controlled burns” to prevent forest fires. This is a practice that is followed in other states including California, Oregon and Idaho. Scientists point to controlled burns as an “important tool for keeping forests healthier and less susceptible to devastating wildfires”. Currently Washington lags far behind California and Oregon in performing controlled burns. Yet the Seattle Times reports that DNR have blocked the Forest Service plans for these controlled burns. When elected, I will work with the Forest Service and allow controlled burns in areas where the science and budget allow.

Additionally, I plan to partner with local fire districts to create a more nimble response to fires. Too often, the bureaucracy in Olympia has delayed the response to small fires that quickly become large disasters. The most recent point in case is the Carlton Complex fire. Poor communications and delays in responding to the fire allow the fire to rage out of control, costing millions of dollars to fight and leaving 300 Washington families homeless. Active engagement with local fire fighter and a more distributed and responsive DNR could have prevented this disaster. My background as an executive managing distributed organization has taught me the value of empowering people to make decision and do what they know is best.

As the commissioner of public lands, I will empower our regions to respond quickly to local events. Inserting the Olympia bureaucracy in these processes is costly, slows the responses, and results in costly and unnecessary losses.

Timber, many parts of the state, is a hot button issue. While some want to protect our forest canopy, others see jobs and resources for building schools as more important. Where do you land in this debate? How will you use your position to find compromise?

The challenge facing the next Commissioner of Public Lands is to balance the needs of competing stakeholders, that all have a very valid concern about the future of our state and our lands. We must pursue

policies, and concert those policies into actionable plans that will maximize the value of our lands. I have a vision and a plan for DNR that is focused on increasing the revenue from public lands, as opposed to the traditional approach that results in winner and loser. Over the last 20 years, the revenue that DNR has produced from our public lands has been a serious and steady decline. Unless we start with reversing this trend, we will not be able to provide for our schools, our environment, and jobs for our communities.

My plan involves diversification of the DNR product mix to reduce reliance on timber, and to increase revenue from other sources, such as wind power, agricultural lease, commercial leases, and shoreline lease. There is great potential for our lands that has not been realized, and the continued reliance on timber harvesting to generate income for our schools is out mode and not sustainable. Timber and timber related jobs will always be part of the DNR product mix, but for us to meet our commitments to the children in Washington; we must explore new uses of public lands and expands on other emerging products, such as shellfish aquaculture.

We must engage with our stakeholders in the environmental community and in industry to find solutions that are mutually beneficial and enable DNR to meet their mission. An approach that is rooted in meeting the needs of only one stakeholder group will fail. This is about using our lands in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century way that enables us to protect the environment, create jobs, and most importantly providing funding for the classrooms that our child need if they are to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### **Treasurer**

What role does the Treasurer hold in maintaining a healthy credit and bond ratings for the state of Washington? Do you see room for improvement?

### **Auditor**

How will you restore confidence in the office of Auditor as a successor to Troy Kelley?

How will you prioritize agency and organizational audits?

### **Attorney General**

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?

### **Insurance Commissioner**

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?