

46th District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

Candidate Information:

Dave Upthegrove for Washington State Lands Commissioner

Candidate Name: Dave Upthegrove

Office sought: Commissioner of Public Lands

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Have you read the 46th LD Democrats Draft 2016 Platform? Yes , No
(Go to http://www.46dems.org/2016_ld_caucus and click "Draft Platform")

Why are you running for this office?

The incumbent Democratic unexpectedly announced he was not seeking re-election. I quickly made a decision to enter the campaign because I believe voters deserve an environmental champion as Commissioner of Public Lands. I want to be that champion and continue the work I have done for 15 years in elected office working to combat climate change, support responsible conservation, and clean up Puget Sound.

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

Voters deserve a State Lands Commissioner who is an environmental champion, and I am excited to be that champion. In the state House I was a leader of the Blue-Green Alliance-- a coalition of pro-labor and pro-environment legislators who advanced a common progressive agenda. My experience in state government as Chair of the House Environment Committee has prepared me to be effective in fulfilling the responsibilities of the office. I hold a BA in environmental conservation and biology, and a graduate certificate in energy policy planning.

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 Democrat and I have never been a member of another party. I came up through the party as a PCO, then as Chair of the 33rd District Democrats. I have been active in the party as a previous Platform Chair for the King County Democrats, and a volunteer with the 33rd District Democrats. I attended the 2008 Democratic National Convention as a delegate, have served in elected office (state House) as a

Democrat, and have put my life's passion into supporting and electing Democrats up and down the ballot. My history of involvement with the Democrat party is a strength I bring to this position.

What's your plan to win?

The campaign just started a few weeks ago (due to the unexpected announcement of the incumbent) but we are off to a strong start. I have secured a general consultant (WinPower Strategies) and a campaign manager, and am working with a fundraising consultant. In the first week of my campaign I raised more than \$40,000, and received press coverage in the Seattle PI, Stranger, West Seattle Weekly Highline Times, and other blogs and media outlets around the state.

I have secured the early endorsements of former Governor Christine Gregoire, King County Executive Dow Constantine, Pierce County Executive Pat McCarthy, US Congressman Adam Smith, Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler, and about 40 Democratic Legislators from around the state, including Senate Democratic Leader Sharon Nelson and environmental champions like Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon, Sen. John McCoy, and Sen. Christine Rolfes. I will win by raising the money to communicate an effective message in the media and also by helping the statewide ticket generate enthusiastic grassroots support. I bring strong qualifications and record to the position.

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?

The most important function is to manage our public state lands in an environmentally sustainable manner while meeting our constitutional obligations to the trust (that helps fund school construction). My knowledge of state government, and my experience successfully managing complex environmental political projects (such as creating the Puget Sound Partnership, and shutting down the state's last coal plant in a way that makes workers and the community whole) as Chair of the House Environment Committee, has prepared me for the challenges of this position.. I have very strong environmental values (100% lifetime voting record with the WA Conservation Voters & was their legislator of the year a few years back), but also have a leadership style that is collaborative and solution-oriented. Folks who have worked with me recognize that I am well suited for this role, as I have earned the sole endorsement of former Governor Chris Gregoire, King County Executive Dow Constantine, and nearly 40 Democratic State Legislators including Rep. Gerry Pollet.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

- (1) Climate change is the greatest threat facing our generation. As lands commissioner I would not support the use of our public state lands to facilitate the fossil fuel agenda. Lets create more jobs by investing in environmental cleanup and renewable energy—not by selling out to the coal companies.
- (2) Improving our prevention, preparation, and response to wildfires.
- (3) Managing our trust lands in an environmentally sustainable manner. While maintaining our commitment to the trust, we need to look for opportunities to protect habitat and the wildlife that relies upon it. We also need to recognize that environmental issues intersect with social

justice issues, and we need to elevate the voices of low income folks and communities of color, and we must respect tribal treaty rights.

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 would absolutely support legislation in these areas. In fact, while in the Legislature I was a strong supporter of proposals in all three of these areas. I was an early enthusiastic supporter of initiative 1433 on the ballot this fall to support paid family leave.

I believe any statewide elected official in the executive branch should be a leader in their party, and I won't hesitate to speak out and be a voice for progressive issues outside of the scope of land management.

How will you work to address racial equity?

I have represented South King County-- the most diverse part of the State of Washington—for 15 years and have been a steadfast supporter of fairness and economic opportunity for all, regardless of race or national origin. Racism, both overt and institutional, continues to be a problem—even here in the progressive Pacific Northwest. As Lands Commissioner, I will embark on a social justice and equity project, modeled after the work we have done in King County government, to institutionalize procedures to ensure we are considering and calculating the impacts of decisions on traditionally disadvantaged communities. I also will reinvigorate efforts to recruit a racially diverse pool of applicants for employment at the department. I will continue to use my voice, and every ounce of political capital I have, to fight racism as well as other injustices such as sexism, homophobia, and religious bigotry.

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

We absolutely need to sunset and review our tax exemptions to make our tax system more fair for average people and to make sure we have adequate revenue as a state to fund education and other basic government functions. As Lands Commissioner I won't be in a position to vote on these issues, but intend to be a voice for a more fair and adequate tax system.

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

One issue I HAVE worked on that hasn't received much attention, but for which I am proud, is legislation I developed and sponsored while in the Legislature to identify and clean up toxic contamination in the

soil at schools and daycares. The old Asarco smelter in Tacoma left a plume of pollution up through North Pierce and South King County, and the heavy metals settled into the soils through this part of the region—often at levels that present some health risk to children should they ingest the dirt/dust. The legislation came about as a result of local constituents—and the result has been fantastic as it has been fully implemented over the years.

In this race for Lands Commissioner, I am really trying to raise awareness of the intersection between environmental issues and social justice issues—and am building a broader coalition of new and diverse voices in the campaign. For example, one of the first endorsements I received was a sole endorsement from UniteHERE Local 8 (the hotel workers union). They haven’t normally been involved in campaigns for this office, but their diverse membership is growing increasingly interested in the social justice aspect of environmental issues. We all need to help the media make this connection.

How will you combat climate change?

I support pricing carbon through an appropriately structured cap-and-trade system and/or carbon tax. Specific to this position, I oppose the leasing of our state aquatic lands for coal export terminals. We can create MORE jobs by investing in environmental cleanup and renewable energy—not by selling out to the coal companies. And, generally, I do not support the use of our public state lands to facilitate the fossil fuel agenda in any way. I also believe we can try new innovative forestry approaches (using our Olympic Experimental State Forest) to measure the carbon storage in timber stands, and monetize the value of that carbon storage in existing carbon credit markets, to allow for more sustainable harvests/longer rotations without harming the revenue for school construction. Generally speaking, I will use the position to support our state’s continued transition to a clean energy economy.

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	My opposition is to the leasing of state aquatic lands for coal export terminals.
Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	X		
Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?	X		
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		Ban the box! ☺
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 schools?

Please describe your position on standardized testing.

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?

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?

We must do a better job preventing and responding to wildfires in our state. What happened this last fire season was unacceptable, and we need to consider new strategies.

First, with more than 1 million acres burned last year, we need to secure the resources from the Legislature necessary to keep our firefighters safe and allow them to be more effective in doing their job. Given my experience and relationships in the Legislature, I will be an effective advocate for firefighting resources.

Second, we need to manage certain existing forests—particularly those near the forest/residential interface, in ways that make them less prone to wildfires, while still ecologically healthy. This could involve, in carefully considered situations, thinning and/or controlled burns. We need to build upon and improve existing programs in this area.

Third, we need to recognize that the best investment is in prevention—and beefing up both public education efforts and public rules/regulations to reduce the risk.

Fourth, we need to incentivize local building codes and development regulations that improve fire safety. Yakima and Chehalis County have both voluntarily adopted such codes. Local governments can make sure that there is adequate space between structures and the forest, easy access for emergency vehicles, building materials on structures that are more fire-resistant, etc.

Finally, we need to listen to the professional firefighters, maintain high training standards, and increase communication with local impacted communities

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?

We need to manage our public lands in the most environmentally sustainable way while meeting our Constitutional obligation to the school trust. The State Constitution mandates—and court cases have further refined—our obligation to maximize revenue to the trust. Until a court rules otherwise, much of our management direction is shaped by the Constitution and these court rulings. I have strongly held environmental values, and want to protect habitat and wildlife. To balance these interests with the constitutional mandate, we need to be creative—and seek to identify and monetize value from other ecosystem services; that is, seek ways to return money to the trust in ways other than just logging (such as selling carbon credits for sequestering carbon, or getting paid from a local government for the stormwater prevention benefits, etc.) These are experimental and modest, but represent the kind of new thinking that needs to be deployed. We also need to recognize that one great opportunity in this position is to acquire lands FOR forestry in developing areas—and possibly partnering with local governments who could purchase the development rights. Taking lands that might otherwise be developed, and putting them into active forestry, with aesthetic and recreational value, is one of the best environmental things we can do.

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?