



2017 Policy Initiative:

Conservation District Buildings

This initiative proposes that the SCC assess conservation districts' current building needs and explore state capital facility funding options that may be available to assist with building purchases.

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

All conservation districts (CDs) require an accessible, local office space.

Conservation districts are authorized by law to purchase real property or obtain an interest in real property. **However, the cost of purchasing a building is out of reach for many CDs.**

Potential opportunities:

- State funding options exist where capital funds may be provided to assist with certain building purchases. More exploration is needed to see if funding options may be available for CDs.
- It doesn't appear that current state law allows CDs to use real property tax exemptions for owning a building. It's worth exploring whether this could change.

PROPOSAL UNDER CONSIDERATION

- SCC staff will engage with conservation districts to identify building needs.
- Once the assessment is complete, the SCC will work with state budget staff to explore options for funding conservation district buildings.
- Any funding option(s) that require legislative approval would be pursued in the 2019 budget session.

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The SCC Board of Commissioners would like comments about this initiative from CDs. **Please talk with your local stakeholders about this proposal, and send us your feedback by COB on December 15, 2017 using the feedback form on our website: scc.wa.gov/2017initiatives.**

Here are some questions to consider:

- Does your CD own a building?
- Does your CD have any building needs?
- Would your district be interested if state funding options and/or tax exemptions were available to CDs?