



# Washington State Conservation Commission

---

November 20, 2018

**TO:** Conservation Commission Members  
Mark Clark, Executive Director

**FROM:** Ron Shultz, WSCC Policy Director

**SUBJECT:** Complaints Regarding Conduct of Thurston CD Supervisor

---

## **Requested Action:**

The Commission has received two new complaints regarding the conduct of Thurston CD supervisors. Commission staff request the Commission review the complaints and, if appropriate, direct the Commission's Executive Director to investigate the complaints to determine their merit and whether any of the complaints could be grounds for removal.

## **Discussion:**

On November 12, 2018 certain members of the Conservation Commission received an email from Richard Mankamyer, Supervisor with the Thurston Conservation District. A copy of the email is attached. In that email Mankamyer complains of the conduct of a fellow board member Paul Pickett. The conduct occurred at an October 30 Thurston CD board meeting. Mankamyer also complains of Facebook postings he attributes to Pickett.

Mankamyer also requests the removal of fellow Thurston CD supervisor Doug Rushton based on allegations raised in a series of articles in The Olympian newspaper in 2000 describing activity by Rushton in 1999 when Rushton was still on the Thurston CD board.

Mankamyer requests the "immediate removal" of supervisors Pickett and Rushton.

According to the Commission rules, removal of a district supervisor may only be done after notice and hearing. WAC 110-110-960. Removal may only occur when neglect of duty or malfeasance are found to have occurred.

Given the Commission's rules for the process of removal, the "immediate removal" of the supervisors is not possible.

Commission staff recommends the Commission follow the previously established approach when receiving a complaint regarding the conduct of a supervisor, and direct the Commission's Executive Director to investigate the allegations in the complaint and report back to the Commission as to whether any of the allegations amount to neglect of duty or malfeasance.

After receiving the report from the Executive Director the Commission may determine whether a hearing on potential removal of the supervisors is warranted.

**Recommended Motion:**

The Commission's Executive Director investigate the complaint filed by Richard Mankamyer regarding two Thurston CD supervisors, Paul Pickett and Doug Rushton. The Executive Director shall report back to the Commission the results of the investigation for consideration by the Commission.

**From:** [Richard TCD](#)  
**To:** [jakropf@wsu.edu](mailto:jakropf@wsu.edu); [deanpl@aol.com](mailto:deanpl@aol.com); [sspaeth@saveland.org](mailto:sspaeth@saveland.org); [lbrown@fairpoint.net](mailto:lbrown@fairpoint.net); [lcochran@hughes.net](mailto:lcochran@hughes.net); [tom-miller@sccd.org](mailto:tom-miller@sccd.org); [McConchie, Trevor \(DNR\)](#); [Susewind, Kelly \(ECY\)](#); [Beale, Perry \(AGR\)](#); [Clark, Mark \(SCC\)](#); [Shultz, Ron \(SCC\)](#); [Eric Johnson](#); [Shawn Newman](#); [Barkis, Andrew](#); [Wilcox, JT](#)  
**Subject:** Removal of Thurston Conservation District Board Supervisors Paul Pickett and Doug Rushton  
**Date:** Monday, November 12, 2018 1:14:27 PM

---

To: Washington State Conservation Commission Executive Committee  
November 11, 2018

RE: Thurston Conservation District Board of Supervisors Behavior and Operations.

As a Whistle Blower, I am writing to the Washington State Conservation Commission Executive Committee to request the immediate removal of Thurston Conservation District Board Supervisors **Paul Pickett and Doug Rushton**. Due to issues of ongoing harassment and discrimination of some of the board, calling some of us names like the “Gang of Three”, neglect of duties, potential OPMA violations, revealing confidential Executive Session materials/discussions to public, unethical conduct, **verbal assault** against TCD Board Chair, Eric Johnson, and other board members, (see recap of 103018 TCD Board Meeting below) spread of malicious misinformation via Facebook, writing letters to Olympian Newspaper and other media outlets and general lack of good governance procedures, it is imperative to the survival of Thurston Conservation District that the Washington State Conservation Commission Executive Committee removes the Board Supervisors mentioned above immediately.

### **Spread of Malicious Misinformation and Neglect of Duties**

Many times throughout the course of his term here, Paul Pickett has shown perversion of his duties as Board Supervisors and spreads malicious misinformation via Facebook, articles in the local Olympian and writes letters to county officials without any official authorization. He vilifies his fellow board members who cannot be bullied into his and Doug Rushton’s way of thinking and voting and implies we are a member of a gang calling us the “Gang of Three”.

He will even assault us verbally and potentially physically (**see recap of 103018 TCD Board Meeting below**). (See screenshots of his Facebook page “Save Our TCD”).

I have personally been disregarded, interrupted and in general disrespected in public meetings by Paul Pickett. He does not follow even the basic Robert’s Rules of order and is constantly speaking over others so he can get his opinion in above all. He is constantly being reminded by the board chair to raise his hand and wait his turn.

It should be noted here that TCD has a long history, since at least 1999, of scandals and of other board members being asked to be removed, even the whole board at one time, and of other sexual, gender biases, and questionable financial and operational practices. All of this has been under the watch of Doug Rushton, who has been behind the scenes for 31+ years manipulating and maneuvering TCD for his own interest, goals and financial gain. Our own internal investigation has revealed improprieties in the election process for over 20 years as indicated in local Olympian Newspaper articles. In TCD’s most recent election, as the board auditor, I asked for an investigation from the WSCC two times, sending along a list of at least 10 potential violations, numerous photos, attachment and never received a reply.

### **Lack of Good Governance**

This situation is causing increased public awareness and distrust for the Washington State Conservation Commission, Thurston Conservation District, and also is having a severe negative impact on the image of all of Washington's Conservation Districts. Other conservation districts have contacted us saying similar things are going on in their districts.

I would like the Washington State Conservation Commission Executive Committee to take swift action to remove Thurston Conservation District Board Supervisors Paul Pickett and Doug Rushton immediately.

Eric Johnson and Richard Mankamyer are farmers oriented to the original goals of the Conservation District's founding father's focus on agriculture. In a recent address to the FFA, Future Farmers of America Convention, The President strongly supported farmers and our future farmers.

I believe this is the best course of action that will allow Thurston Conservation District's remaining supervisors, agriculturally oriented, to move forward on a positive and productive path, continue to serve the people of our community and get crucial conservation projects on the ground at reasonable cost to the tax payers.

I am afraid for myself, fellow board members, staff and the public with Paul Pickett in the room.

I would appreciate a speedy reply. I know others have also called for the immediate removal of Paul Pickett and Doug Rushton. Please keep in mind we have a regular scheduled board meeting this Thursday the 15th of November, 2018 and I and perhaps other board members will not want to be in the same room with Paul Pickett.

-----

### **103018 TCD Board Meeting Recap**

In a fit of mental and physical rage, Paul Pickett, State Union Member - AFSCME, State Dept of Ecology Leader, **loses it** at TCD Board meeting on 10-30-18 when he and Doug Rushton, do not get their way trying to force other board members to pass do-nothing inflated grants from the Wa State Dept of Health and the Wa State Dept of Ecology for over ½ million dollars.

He verbally assaulted board chair Eric Johnson, using profanity and appeared to be prepared to assault him physically when Mr. Johnson attempted to cancel the meeting and left the room among jeers and verbal threats from the Union members, League of Women voters and Sierra Club in addition to others in attendance.

In a display of verbal and physical aggression, Paul Pickett showed his true colors and intent as to why he was elected by the local activists, to come into the TCD and push their agendas.

If Mr. Johnson, TCD Board Chair, had not left the meeting when he did, I was afraid that Paul Pickett was going to physically assault Mr. Johnson, which would have directly affected other board members including Linda Powell, sitting right next to him and myself, just one person away and potentially the staff and the public sitting just feet away. If Paul Pickett would have gotten up to assault Mr. Johnson and Mr. Johnson would have pushed Paul Pickett backwards to protect himself, he could have fallen on Linda Powell, myself, and members of the public,

only feet away, that were in attendance.

I felt that I was assaulted by Paul Pickett, his close proximity to me, his turning red in the face and his banging on the table and yelling and swearing. I do not want to be in a room again with Paul Pickett.

Within several minutes the meeting was concluded by vice chair, Linda Powell, as Paul Pickett and Doug Rushton attempted to still pass the DOH and DOE grants. Both were defeated. Immediately after the meeting concluded Paul Pickett was congratulated by State Executive Director of the Washington Federation of State Employees, (WFSE)/AFSCME Council 28, Greg Devereux, and other union members. Paul then stated to Greg Devereux, **I blew it didn't I?** And they both laughed! Other union members also came up to Paul and congratulated him.

I would also add that although Pickett abstained on a vote related to Dept of Ecology grant he did second the motion and did not disclose that he is an employee of that agency, which could be a violation of the OPMA and potentially other rules and regulations.

It appears his behavior would be a violation of numerous ethics rules and interfered with Mr. Johnson's ability to conduct the meeting in a safe and orderly manner and perform his role as Chair of the TCD.

During this time period near the end of the meeting, the Executive Director of the Washington Federation of State Employees, Greg Devereux, threatened the board with legal action if the board did not sign their (union) letter of recognition.

The Union bus was in the TCD parking lot and they had 40+ people standing at the TCD door and may have prohibited people from coming into the meeting. They met outside the building, inside the TCD lobby and Board Meeting Room, before during and after the meeting. They presented an intimidating atmosphere for any voice of reason. They were filming themselves giving comments at the meeting and also filmed others. Some of the other public that was there said they felt threatened by these actions as the union filled the room and hallways.

The Union encouraged TCD Staff to lobby the TCD board for grants that they wanted passed so they would have funding for their jobs. The Union was lobbying in a public meeting, Ben Peterson, WSFE union organizer, was recording staff speaking. Staff and other union members were wearing their green Union shirts.

State Rep. Laurie Dolan showed up and offered her support for the whole fiasco.

Sincerely,

Richard Mankamy  
TCD Board, Auditor