



Washington State Conservation Commission

Policy Name and #	2023-09 SCC Procedure On Creating A New Policy
Applies to:	Conservation Commission Staff
Effective Date:	July 31, 2023 Originally approved by Conservation Commissioners on May 17, 2012
Approved By:	 Interim Executive Director

PURPOSE

Development of a procedure for various agency policies the State Conservation Commission agency management or staff may develop.

BACKGROUND

A procedure is needed to guide SCC management or staff on the process to develop a new policy and to receive final approval.

POLICY

There are three types of agency policies used by the Conservation Commission:

Agency Operations Policies (AOP) – Policies that address the administrative operation of the agency, such as harassment policies and inclement weather policies. All state agencies are required to have such policies regarding various administrative activities. There may be AOPs that impact districts, such as a policy for the processing of vouchers. Of these two forms, the first do not need to go to districts and may not even need to go to the Commission. Some may warrant director approval only. To engage our staff in these agency operational policies, policy staff will share the draft to staff for their review and the opportunity to provide suggested changes or edits to the policy team and director for consideration prior to its finalization.

For those policies impacting districts there is an outlined approach to distribute them in draft form to districts seeking comment before final Commission approval. See “Formal Process Engaging Conservation Districts” below.

Commission Guidance to Districts – These are statements from the Commission to the districts on suggested actions a district should take or consider taking. Districts are not required to take action on the guidance nor are there consequences for not following the guidance. An example would be our recent “Guidance to Districts on Public Private Activities”. Draft proposals of guidance to districts should be distributed to districts for comment prior to final Commission approval.

Commission Policy Positions – A policy position is a statement of an official position on an issue. Examples would be in the form of “the Commission supports X” or “the Commission opposes Y”. It could also be a statement directing staff to take some action or work an issue in a particular way.

Formal Process Engaging Conservation Districts

It is important to the agency and its constituents that a formal process is followed when developing agency policies. The Commission would benefit from an approach that engages conservation districts in the process before formal decisions by the Commission.

The process for adoption of any policy impacting the activities of conservation districts are as follows:

Step 1: Commission staff presents proposed Commission policy to the Commission at a regular or special meeting. The Commission is to review the proposal, make any changes, and approve the proposal for distribution to districts for comment.

Step 2: Districts will have a minimum of 45 days to review the proposal, providing sufficient time for the proposal to be considered at a district board meeting.

Step 3: Commission staff will receive all comments from districts, review the policy proposal in light of the comments, make any recommended changes based on the comments the Commission staff deem appropriate, and present the district comments and staff recommendations to the Commission for final approval.

The time period for this process may be longer depending on the nature of the issues in the proposed policy and the engagement and interest level of districts.