

# **Media Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **King County Council Chair Dave Upthegrove Enters Race for Lands Commissioner**

*An experienced environmental leader with a long track record of accomplishment, Upthegrove enters the race after spending months traveling the state and listening to the concerns of local grassroots conservation leaders*

Des Moines – King County Council chair Dave Upthegrove announced today that he is entering the 2024 race for Lands Commissioner.

“After spending months travelling the state, I have heard clearly that people want a Lands Commissioner with strong environmental values who also has the relevant background and experience to put those values into action,” Upthegrove said. “For me, running for State Lands Commissioner is the culmination of a life and career focused on environmental and natural resources issues, not a stepping stone to higher office. I am ready to deliver on a forward-looking conservation and climate protection agenda.”

He added, “With Republican and timber industry-backed candidates expected to make a strong run for the seat, I also believe I am the candidate best

positioned to win both the primary and a potentially challenging general election.”

In a multi-candidate field, Upthegrove, a former Washington Conservation Voters’ Legislator of the Year, stands out as the candidate with a proven record of major environmental and conservation achievements. During his 12 years in the legislature, Upthegrove chaired the House Select Committee on Puget Sound, helping to create the Puget Sound Partnership. Later he chaired the House Environment Committee, working across the state to reduce carbon pollution, clean up toxic sites, and improve oil spill protection, and helped to lead the Blue-Green Alliance in the legislature that brought together labor and environmental leaders around a shared policy agenda.

On the King County Council and as Chair of the King County Flood Control District, Upthegrove has worked to preserve public lands and manage growth, doubled funding for salmon recovery and led reforms to better protect rivers in the central Puget Sound.

Upthegrove, whose life experience as an early LGBTQ elected official shaped his views on environmental and social justice, would be the first out LGBTQ statewide executive officeholder in Washington State.

He enters with the support of a broad and diverse array of Democratic elected leaders including King County Executive Dow Constantine, US Rep. Adam Smith and State Auditor Pat McCarthy, as well as many environmental and conservation advocates.

“Dave has a proven track record as a progressive leader for environmental and natural resource issues, passionately advocating for environmental justice in underserved communities,” said Seattle Port Commissioner Hamdi Mohammed, who is the first Somali woman elected to public office in Washington State.

“I’ve watched Dave get big things done over the years to protect our rivers, salmon and natural areas by working collaboratively with tribal governments and indigenous people,” said Rep. Chris Stearns, who was the first Native

American member of Auburn City Council before being elected to the state legislature.

Connie Gallant, an award-winning Latina environmental leader from the Olympia Peninsula, said that, “Dave Upthegrove not only has the environmental values we need, but also the background and experience needed to advance those values. Those of us doing the conservation work on the ground value his record and leadership on natural resource issues.”

In terms of his issues agenda for the Department of Natural Resources, Upthegrove is pledging to focus on a progressive environmental approach to reflect our climate crisis—including preservation of mature legacy forests. He will also prioritize a commitment to good jobs, supporting a strong rural economy, on centering environmental justice, honoring tribal treaty rights, improving wildfire prevention, and expanding recreational opportunities for Washington residents across our state.

For more on Dave’s background, qualifications, and agenda for the Department of Natural Resources, visit his campaign website at [www.upthegrove.org](http://www.upthegrove.org).

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