

**REVENUE: No revenue impact**

**FISCAL: No fiscal impact**

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<b>Action:</b>	Do Pass
<b>Vote:</b>	6 - 0 - 1
<b>Yeas:</b>	Berger, Buckley, Esquivel, Roblan, Thatcher, Rosenbaum
<b>Nays:</b>	-
<b>Exc.:</b>	Hunt
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Jim Stenbridge, Administrator
<b>Meeting Dates:</b>	4/6, 4/20

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Eliminates tallying of write-in votes for Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Director election when no qualified nominee appears on the ballot, unless a qualified write-in candidate requests that write-in votes be tallied. Requires write-in candidate to request tally of write-in votes at least 25 days before the date of the election. When no qualifying write-in candidate has made such a request, prohibits elections officers from counting any write-in votes; and authorizes the SWCD governing board, instead, to fill the position by appointment. Delineates circumstances under which an SWCD director vacancy is to be declared and filled by appointment by the SWCD governing board.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Appropriate notification deadlines
- Definition of elections officer for SWCD elections
- Cost of tallying write-in votes when no candidate is on the ballot and write-in candidates are not eligible
- Cases of elected officials refusing to take oath of office
- Qualifications for SWCD Directors
- Case of entertainer who told audiences to write in name

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:** Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) governing boards consist of 5-to-7 directors, not more than two of which are elected at-large, the remainder being zone directors. To qualify for election or appointment as a zone director, candidates must manage ten or more acres of land and live within the district.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Division provides support to 45 SWCDs throughout the state. SWCDs coordinate and provide assistance to landowners and managers interested in conservation and watershed enhancement, especially resources of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service). SWCDs help landowners identify, plan, and implement conservation measures that reduce soil erosion, protect stream banks, improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and address other natural resource concerns. The Natural Resources Division provides administrative oversight for SWCD programs, provides SWCD director and employee training, and promotes cooperation among all SWCDs. Because of the unique qualifications needed to be elected SWCD Director, most write-in candidates are not eligible to serve.

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*This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.*