

P-14	Recognize protection and stewardship of natural resources in Preamble	Rachel Kurtz McAlaine, On behalf of Standing for Washington	Preamble
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Makes the environment a county priority

Sponsor of Proposal

Rachel Kurtz-McAlaine On behalf of Standing for Washington

Brief Summary of Proposal:

This proposal would amend the Pierce County Charter preamble to recognize protection and stewardship of the County’s watersheds, ecosystems, and natural resources as a core value of county government. The amendment is intended to align the Charter with Pierce County’s stated priorities, including a clean and sustainable environment, tribal partnerships, accountability and good governance, and customer-focused services. The proposal is values-based, not regulatory. It is intended to guide interpretation and signal that stewardship of the natural systems upon which Pierce County communities depend is part of the County’s basic purpose

Proposed Charter Amendment:

Current Preamble:

We, the people of Pierce County, Washington, in order to secure the benefits of home rule, establish separate legislative and executive branches, provide responsible and integrated County government, claim the rights of initiative and referendum, and encourage citizen participation, in accordance with the Constitution of the State of Washington, do hereby adopt this Charter.

Proposed Preamble:

We, the people of Pierce County, Washington, in order to secure the benefits of home rule, establish separate legislative and executive branches, provide responsible and integrated County government, claim the rights of initiative and referendum, protect and steward the watersheds, ecosystems, and natural resources upon which our communities depend, and encourage citizen participation, in accordance with the Constitution of the State of Washington, do

hereby adopt this Charter.

Rationale for Proposal:

This amendment would align Pierce County's Charter with environmental and stewardship language already used in other Washington charter counties while using language tailored to Pierce County's own natural systems, economy, and quality of life. King County's charter preamble includes preserving, protecting, and enhancing a healthy rural and urban environment and economy. Whatcom County's preamble begins by treasuring the many wonders of its unique environment. San Juan County's charter recognizes the interdependence between a healthy community, a resilient economy, and a vibrant natural world.

Why this belongs in the preamble:

A charter preamble is the right place for this kind of language because the preamble states the County's basic purposes and guiding principles. The Pierce County Charter Review Commission is already considering a preamble amendment proposal, C-6, for further development. Adding watershed and stewardship language in the preamble would place this principle at the same level as Pierce County's existing charter commitments to home rule, integrated government, initiative and referendum, and citizen participation.

Why this language still makes sense with the Office of Watershed Stewardship proposal:

The preamble and the office proposal do different jobs and reinforce each other. The preamble states a countywide value and interpretive principle. The Office of Watershed Stewardship would provide a practical transparency and reporting mechanism through which county leadership, the public, and partner entities can better understand long-term watershed conditions and cumulative effects. The preamble does not need to do operational work because the office proposal does that separately.

Why the proposal is framed as "protect and steward":

This language is intentionally framed as a statement of county purpose and interpretation, not as a regulatory standard. It signals that stewardship of the County's watersheds, ecosystems, and natural resources is a core public value, while leaving implementation details to other charter or code provisions.

Why the proposal remains broad:

The preamble uses broader language than the companion office proposal because a preamble serves a different function.

“Watersheds, ecosystems, and natural resources” captures the full range of living systems and resources Pierce County communities depend on, which is appropriate for a values statement even when a companion proposal uses a more focused term.

Summary Points

Submit written testimony

By Email: katey.hobbs@piercecountywa.gov

By Web Form: <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/FormCenter/Charter-Review-41/Provide-Written-Public-Comment-893>

Submitted public testimony

Names in **RED** = CON

Names in **GREEN** = PRO

As of 3-27-26 = **0 CON** ~ **0 PRO**

Packet
