



Political Endorsements: What's Coming Up in 2019

By Dean Amel

The Sierra Club is one of the few local environmental groups which regularly endorses candidates. How does this happen? At the local, state, and national levels, the Club follows an extensive set of guidelines established by the National Sierra Club Political Committee (SCPC). The SCPC advises local Sierra Club groups to pay close attention to these three factors when considering endorsements:

1. The candidate's overall environmental record and platform, as measured by his or her history of public service, public statements, responses in Club interviews and questionnaires, and other factors;
2. The candidate's performance on environmental issues as an incumbent, if the candidate is an incumbent running for reelection; and
3. The candidate's prospect of winning the election, or at least mounting a credible campaign.

The actual endorsement process varies according to the circumstances of the particular election (for example, whether there's an incumbent running who the Club has previously endorsed).

Alexandria elected a new mayor and all of its city council members in 2018, so local electoral action this year will be focused in Arlington and Fairfax.

Most of the action will be in Fairfax, half of which is in the territory of the Mount Vernon Group and half of which lies within the area covered by our neighboring group to the west, the Great Falls Group. Fairfax is governed by a ten-person Board of Supervisors, with all seats up for grabs in 2019. Five of those ten seats have no incumbents running this year, an unusually large number. This means that this election could have a big effect on the environmental views of the Board of Supervisors for several years.

The chair of the Board of Supervisors runs countywide. To date, two candidates are certified in the Democratic primary, but more are expected to run. No Republicans are certified at this time. The other nine supervisors run in districts. There will be Democratic primaries in at least two districts. Of the nine districts, three are in Mount Vernon Group territory, three are in

Great Falls Group territory, and three are shared. We've already met with Great Falls Group volunteers and with representatives of other environmental groups to begin coordinating our efforts. Anyone interested in working on Fairfax County political endorsements should contact political chair Dean Amel at damel@alum.mit.edu.

Every four years there are two Arlington County Board races, rather than one, and 2019 is such a year. It's expected that incumbents Katie Cristol and Christian Dorsey will run for reelection. No challengers have announced to date. The Club did not endorse Cristol or Dorsey in their first runs for office in 2015, but we've worked productively with them on some issues during their first terms in office and we'll pursue possible endorsements, should they run again. Contact Dean Amel if you're interested in getting involved.

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