

## Guidelines Regarding Chapter Endorsements of Candidates in Sierra Club Board Elections

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California law allows only the Board of Directors ("Board") to authorize the expenditure of Sierra Club funds to support nominees in Sierra Club elections. The Board has voted to allow chapters to endorse candidates and authorized the expenditure of Sierra Club funds to publish these endorsements in certain Sierra Club publications. Below are guidelines to assist Sierra Club leaders in complying with this chapter endorsement rule. If you have any questions about this rule, please contact the Chief Inspector of Election before taking any action.

### 1. What is the rule on chapter endorsement of candidates in Sierra Club elections?

Chapters, but not groups or other Sierra Club entities, may vote to recommend one or more candidates in the election to the Board. Such a chapter recommendation must be adopted in a regular or special meeting by a two-thirds majority of the number of executive committee members of the chapter then in office. All candidates shall be given reasonable notice of any meeting at which such a recommendation is to be considered and provided an opportunity to make written materials relevant to their candidacy available at the meeting, at no cost to the chapter, for consideration by the executive committee. Chapters and groups may expend Sierra Club funds to communicate such a recommendation by the publication of the following statement in the newsletters and websites of the chapter and its own groups. "The [insert chapter name] recommends a vote for [insert names of supported candidates] in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors."

### 2. What materials can chapters request candidates to provide for consideration?

A chapter may request only two kinds of materials in advance of a chapter ExCom meeting: (a) the candidate's draft statement for the election materials, whether or not it has yet been approved by the Ballot Statement Review Committee for the national Sierra Club election pamphlet and/or (b) the candidate's answers to the questions posed for the Candidate Forum on the Sierra Club's public pages for the election (see separate Guidelines for these questions). A candidate may submit whatever additional materials he or she may wish.

### 3. Who can endorse candidates?

Chapters, the Sierra Student Coalition, and the Board are the only Sierra Club entities that can endorse candidates. The Sierra Student Coalition is considered a chapter for the purposes of this rule. The Board also retains its authority to endorse candidates in the election. Other Sierra Club entities may not endorse candidates. Except for groups publishing their chapter's endorsement as provided by this rule, other Sierra Club entities may not expend resources to support or oppose candidates or publicize the endorsements of chapters.

### 4. When can candidates be endorsed?

Candidates can be endorsed at a regular or special meeting. Prior to such a meeting, all candidates must be given reasonable notice of the meeting and provided an opportunity to send the executive committee written materials relevant to their candidacy. This notice can be given

by sending an email message at least seven days prior to the meeting to the following address: [BOD-CANDIDATES@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG](mailto:BOD-CANDIDATES@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG). The notice shall contain: (1) the name of the chapter; (2) the date of the meeting at which the executive committee will consider endorsements; and (3) the manner by which a candidate should make available his or her written material for consideration by the executive committee. To assist the candidates in identifying such notices, please include in the Subject heading of the message the name of the chapter, "Board candidate endorsement meeting", and the date the meeting will be held.

Sierra Club members seeking to qualify as candidates by petition do not officially become candidates until the requisite number of valid signatures nominating them are delivered to the Sierra Club, but all of these individuals are included on the candidates' e-mail list. So, keep in mind that there may be individuals on the candidates' e-mail list who you could consider endorsing at your meeting, but who subsequently fail to qualify as candidates on the ballot.

Chapters may not announce any endorsement meeting or request materials from candidates and petitioners before December 17.

5. How many candidates can be endorsed?

As few as one, or as many as all candidates who have qualified as nominees can be endorsed.

6. How many executive committee members must vote in favor of an endorsement?

At least two-thirds of the number of executive committee members then in office must vote in favor. Carefully consult your bylaws to verify who is an executive committee member before voting. If you have any questions about this subject, please contact the Inspectors of Election before your meeting. Vacant seats on the executive committee do not count toward the number of executive committee members then in office. Executive committee members must be present at the meeting to vote. This includes participation in the meeting through use of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment, so long as all members participating in the meeting can hear one another, that all parts of the deliberation can be heard by participating members, and that all participating members have received the materials provided by candidates prior to the meeting.

The minutes of a meeting at which a vote on an endorsement occurs should reflect only a simple motion(s) stating the candidate(s) for whom the chapter recommends a vote in the upcoming election, and the vote of the executive committee members on each such motion.

For the protection of Sierra Club and the candidates, the minutes should not include the underlying discussion at the meeting.

7. Where can an endorsement be published?

Endorsements can be published only in the newsletter and website of the chapter and its own groups. Chapters and their respective groups should not publish the endorsements of other chapters in their newsletters and websites. It is very important that all Sierra Club publications strictly adhere to this limitation on which Sierra Club publications may publish endorsements.

At their discretion, candidates also may include such endorsements in their statements in the ballot pamphlet and other materials prepared at their expense or those of their supporters. The Ballot Statement Review Committee will require candidates to submit with their statements evidence that the chapter has made the endorsement in question.

8. What can be published about an endorsement by a chapter and its groups?

Only the following statement can be published: "The [insert chapter name] recommends a vote for [insert names of supported candidates] in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club's Board of Directors." It is acceptable to include this sentence along with a general message announcing the Sierra Club election or to publish it as a separate announcement. The statement should appear only once per newsletter issue or website. Customary fonts, shading, and borders for such announcements may be used. The font used shall be no larger than 14 point.

9. When and where must chapters report endorsement decisions?

If and when a chapter executive committee has made the decision to endorse one or more candidates, or not to endorse any candidate, this information must be forwarded to the Sierra Club's national office [[bod-candidates@lists.sierraclub.org](mailto:bod-candidates@lists.sierraclub.org)] within three days of that decision.

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Should any part of the process not be clear to you after reading the Guidelines, please contact me promptly.

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