



23rd Legislative District Democrats

2016 Candidate Endorsement/Approval Questionnaire

Please complete this questionnaire carefully and thoroughly. You may attach your typed responses to the questions as necessary. It is important that you return the completed questionnaire to the 23rd Legislative District Democrats Chairperson as soon as possible so that an interview can be scheduled at an Executive Board meeting. We prefer that you submit the questionnaire via email to chair@kitsap23rd.com.

PART A: (Part A of your completed questionnaire will be made available to members prior to the vote to endorse or approve and to other interested individuals via our regular communications and our website only for candidates/issues endorsed or approved by the membership.)

1. Full name and home address.

Debra Ann Lester
266 Ericksen Avenue NE
Bainbridge Island, Washington 98110

2. Office/Position sought. Kitsap Public Utility District 1, Commissioner District 1

3. Are you seeking endorsement or approval? Endorsement

4. Official name and address of campaign.

Debra Lester Campaign
321 High School Road NE, Suite D3, #717 Bainbridge Island, Washington 98110

5. Campaign contact information (email, phone numbers, etc.)

email: lester98110@gmail.com • cell number: (206) 588-9588 • websites: <http://www.debralester.net> and <http://www.debbilester.net>

6. Election date(s) - Primary and/or General Election(s).

Primary Election: August 2, 2016 • General Election: November 8, 2016

- 7. Is your race partisan or non-partisan?** Non-partisan
- 8. Political party affiliation, history of participation and membership..**
My political party affiliation is the Democratic Party with a 35-year democratic voting record history and participation. Recently I was elected as a delegate to the 23rd Legislative District Caucus / Kitsap County Democratic Convention and then elected as an alternate delegate to the 6th Congressional District Caucus.
- 9. Current and previous offices held.**
2012 Bainbridge Island Mayor
2010-2013 Bainbridge Island City Council Member
- 10. Current employer other than elected office, if any.** Art Access magazine
- 11. Past work experience.**
For over 24 years, I've been the manager and publisher of Art Access, a print and online magazine serving Washington and Oregon businesses. This bi-monthly print and online publication (<http://www.artaccess.com>) provides the latest exhibit information for museums, galleries, and art venues from as far north as Bellingham, Washington and as far south as Portland, Oregon.
- 12. Military experience.** None
- 13. Educational background**
Graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri; Fine Arts, BA
- 14. Affiliations with clubs or other organizations.**
Following the four-year-all-consuming-tenure of Bainbridge Island City Council which I also opted for the additional responsibilities to serve on several boards and committees (Housing Kitsap, Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council (KRCC), KRCC Transportation Policy Committee, Puget Sound Regional Coordinating Council Transportation Policy Board, and as liaison to various community committees Ad Hoc Tree Committee, Public Art Committee, Waypoint Committee, Non-Motorized Transportation Committee), I decided to take time off and withheld from committing full time to any organizations until this particular opportunity of Kitsap Public Utility District Commissioner District 1 was presented.

Recently though, I was the mentor for Girl Scout Kate Matthews who achieved her Gold Award, the Girl Scout's highest honor. Matthews was honored at a special Gold Award Gala held at the Tacoma Art Museum on June 7, 2015.

Although currently not actively seated on any boards or committees, I have continued to provide unofficial assistance to the Bainbridge Island Arts & Humanities Public Art

Committee. As well I also continue to participate in local political issues: Bainbridge Island Police Station, Transportation Impact Fees, and the Sound to Olympic Trail. Just recently, I provided one of the letters of support for the Sound to Olympics Trail grant application and a couple of weeks ago it announced that the Sound to Olympics Trail was awarded funding from Puget Sound Regional Council.

15. What major issues will be addressed in the office you are seeking? Briefly explain your positions on these issues?

Water is one of our most precious resources. KPUD has for many years done excellent work in providing a safe and reliable water utility service. The collective management and monitoring of our water resource are critical for the entire county. I will support this continued work as well as reach out to fellow elected leaders of the county, tribes, and cities to work collaboratively to maintain, recharge, conserve as well as if need be change practices to make sure this resource is continually available.

As KPUD was just given Wastewater Management authority in the last election, this will be a large transition for KPUD. Port Gamble will be the first wastewater treatment facility run by KPUD and it will take time to get systems in place and everything up and running smoothly. Thereafter, KPUD could begin to respond to other requests for wastewater management services. We know that there have been manage challenges throughout Kitsap with old and failing septics. KPUD will play a vital role properly treating waste and managing wastewater so that the cleaned/treated water stays in the freshwater system rather than simply be flushed out to Puget Sound.

Since 2001, KPUD has been given the authority by the state legislature to wholesale broadband/fiber optics service. KPUD has done a great job providing a telecommunications fiber backbone to many cities, fire districts, and schools. What is now needed is to get the last mile of installing/providing service to home owners, hospitals, and businesses. This means either getting authority from legislature to provide retail broadband service, collaborate with cities providing retail broadband service or work with cities and neighborhoods to create community wifi systems (KPUD has created community wifi test pilot programs in downtown Poulsbo and Bainbridge Island). As a KPUD commissioner, working with my colleagues and fellow elected officials, we will figure out what is best method for each city, community, and neighborhood to most cost effectively complete that last mile so that internet connectivity is provided for all. As well, using my lobbying and advocating skills, at the state legislature and locally at tribal, city, and county meetings, as agreed with other KPUD commissioners, we will get the necessary policies and legislature in place to get this job done. Providing another option of broadband service creates competition that helps to lower the cost to the customer.

16. What experience do you have that is directly related to the office you are seeking. With my Bainbridge Island city council member colleagues, we reviewed management options for the City of Bainbridge Island Water Utility. Although the council narrowly voted to have the City of Bainbridge Island retain management of the Water Utility, the

Bainbridge Island City Council did successfully reduce the water rates by 65% to be equivalent to those rates of the Kitsap Public Utility District. It was through these thorough investigative efforts that I was first introduced to the fine work of the Kitsap Public Utility District.

As a Bainbridge Island City council member and former Bainbridge Island Mayor it was our fiduciary duty to oversee the budgets, establish policies, and annually review capital projects for Water Utility, Sewer Utility, and Storm Water Management Utility as well as many for the many other aspects of running a city.

17. Do you have any management training or experience? If so, please elaborate.

As former Bainbridge Island Mayor and City Council Member, with fellow city council members we had the responsibility of managing the city manager. We interviewed and selected an interim city manager and then two years later interviewed and hired a permanent city manager. I participated in both the interim and permanent city manager interview processes as well as annual reviews of the city manager's performance.

Independently I also took courses provided by the Association of Washington Cities to prepare me for my role as a city council member.

My 24-year business experience publishing Art Access magazine for the past 24 years has given me great insight to the skills needed to successfully manage a business.

18. Why are you seeking this office? What do you hope to achieve and what qualifications do you have toward that goal?

With Kitsap Public Utility District managing over 40% of Bainbridge Island's water services through the North Bainbridge and most recent KPUD's purchases of the Island Utility Bainbridge and the South Bainbridge Water System, and KPUD's current consideration for managing Bainbridge Island Sewer District #7, it seems the opportune time to seek representation on the KPUD Board for a Bainbridge Island resident.

Working with fellow commissioners, my goal is to assure KPUD customers affordable and reliable utility services using a thorough process of rate setting, cost/benefit analysis, and budget reviews.

Having worked directly with many Kitsap County elected officials and tribal leaders, my focus is on building stronger alliances to carefully manage our water resources, treat wastewater so as to retain more freshwater resources in freshwater systems, and continue efforts to extend broadband telecommunications. Our communities become more resilient when our cities, tribes, public utility districts, and county work with each other. By working together we will create greater financial efficiencies for utility ratepayers. I will also be a tireless advocate for legislation and policies that benefit KPUD and its customers. Whether testifying in Olympia or attending county, tribal, or city meetings, my job will be to represent the interests of KPUD customers.

I support and will continue to encourage KPUD's disaster preparedness efforts. Having a disaster plan, running disaster drills, and readying mobile/back up generators are key to providing continual service when hit by a natural disaster.

I will use my experiences and advocacy abilities to work for KPUD customers, and I respectfully ask for the endorsement by 23rd Legislative District Democrats.

19. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, please give a detailed explanation.

No

20. Have you ever filed for personal or business bankruptcy or had a judgment against you? If so, please give a detailed explanation? No.

21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I was honored to be nominated and received the 2013 Citizen of the Year Award from the Bainbridge Island Chamber of Commerce. And in 2013, I was voted "Best Public Servant" by the Bainbridge Review readership — fellow Bainbridge Islander, Governor Jay Inslee, was a finalist.

*Space is intentional here to separate Part A from Part B
as Part B is only to be viewed by the Executive Board.*

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