



BELLA VISTA WATER DISTRICT

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Board of Directors Election FAQ

1. Why doesn't a District Board of Directors election appear on my county ballot?

Bella Vista Water District is organized as a California Water District, which uses a landowner voting system instead of the traditional voter-resident election process. Elections must be conducted in accordance with the current California Election and Water Code sections. Because of this structure, District elections do not appear on the standard county voter ballot. Instead, ballots are mailed directly to eligible landowners as determined by the County Assessor's role.

2. I've lived here for years and have never received this type of ballot—why now?

Board Members serve four-year terms. In many past election cycles, the number of candidates who filed was equal to or fewer than the number of open seats. When that happens, the County Board of Supervisors issues an appointment in lieu of election, and no election is held. You only receive a ballot when more people run for office than there are available seats.

3. What is landowner voting?

In a California Water District, voting is based on land ownership, not residency. Ballots are mailed to the record owners of land within the District, and votes are weighted according to the assessment rules defined in the Water Code.

4. Why weren't there candidate statements included with my ballot?

Candidate statements are not required under the current election rules. Currently, candidates are required to pay for printing costs associated with candidate states. The District is considering posting candidate statements on the website in future election cycles.

5. What does "Sign the Ballot" mean? Do I sign the ballot itself?

No. You do not sign the ballot itself. "Sign the Ballot" means you must sign the return envelope that your ballot goes into before mailing it back. This signature is required to validate your ballot.

6. The top tabs on my ballot were torn off. Is that a problem?

Only the right-side tab should be removed during ballot processing. If both tabs were removed, your ballot can generally still be counted, but future ballots will include clearer instructions such as "Do Not Tear Off" on the left tab.

7. Do I need to submit a proxy?

Most voters do not need a proxy. Proxies are only required in specific cases, such as when multiple owners of a parcel need to designate one voting representative.

We are an equal opportunity employer and provider.

8. I didn't know an election was happening until my ballot arrived. How can I get advance notice?

To improve communication, the District will provide additional election information on the Board of Directors page section on the District website, notices on water bills once an election is confirmed, and a link to election information with future ballots.

9. What is an appointment in lieu of election?

If the number of candidates does not exceed the number of available Board seats, an election is not required. The County Board of Supervisors appoints the candidates directly, and those individuals take office without a formal election which eliminates the substantial costs for conducting an election.

10. Where can I learn more about the laws governing Water District's and elections?

The California Water Code, specifically Division 13, governs California Water Districts under sections 34000 to 38501. This division outlines the formation, organization, powers, and purposes of such districts, including the authority to maintain works for water production, storage, distribution, and drainage. Election procedures are defined in the California Codes, specifically as follows:

CA Elections Code § 10509 et seq.

CA Water Code § 35003 et seq.