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Election Policy

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Election Overview

The Sacramento Natural Foods Cooperative's (SNFC) elections[1] shall be held in accordance with applicable California statutes (Bylaws, §6.07), in a manner prescribed by SNFC Bylaws, the Board of Directors (Board), and this Election Policy (Policy), as established by the Board (Bylaws §6.07). The election process should ensure secret ballots. The Election Policy prescribes procedures for the following types of elections and actions:

- Annual Board of Director elections (Bylaws, §5.01(a), 5.01(b), 5.09, Article 7)
- Referenda and initiatives (measures) or advisory surveys submitted to SNFC Membership (Bylaws, §5.01(a), 5.01(b), 5.02, 5.09)
- Amendments to bylaws submitted to SNFC Membership (Bylaws, §10.06)
- Board of Director recall elections (Bylaws, §6,04(a))
- Board of Director election to fill a vacancy caused by recall of Director (Bylaws, §6.03(b))

1. General Election Administration and Timeline

Annually, the Board shall conduct a general election for the SNFC Membership to elect Board Members, in conformity with Bylaws Article 7. Ranked Choice voting may be implemented with Board approval. Elections may be conducted online with an electronic ballot packet sent to members via email only. For members not voting electronically, paper ballots will be available in the store along with a drop box for return of completed paper ballots. Any proposed (1) amendments to Bylaws, (2) measures, or (3) advisory surveys that properly qualify for submission to the Membership[2] may be included in the general election.[3]

1.1 Election Administration

The Board, or its designee, shall be responsible for entering and managing contracts with election administration providers, including, but not limited to, full-service providers of online elections.[4] Such contracts, when entered into by the Board, are incorporated into the Election Policy for purposes of election administration. Pursuant to the terms of the contract, and in accordance with the Bylaws, the election administration provider shall be responsible for creating individual voter IDs for the ballot preparation, vote verification, election certification, and election report production.

An Election Committee (Committee) shall be appointed by the Board to otherwise administer elections (Bylaws §6.05). The Committee and Board Administrator are responsible for election administration duties that complement the election administration provider contract.

SNFC Staff will be responsible for the graphic layout of the electronic and paper ballots and will work with the election administration provider in the creation of individual ballots. The Board Administrator will review and give final approval to the election administration provider for all election email messages sent to members as part of the balloting and voting process. Dates are in the month-day-year order (e.g. November 13, 2025 or 11/13/25) and time is written in 12-hour notation (e.g. 1:30 pm).

1.2 Election Information Packet and Election Timeline
Annually, in coordination with the Committee, the Board Administrator shall edit the Election Information Packet. It shall include:

- An election timeline;[5]
- Candidate eligibility and nomination information;
- Guidelines for Candidate Statements;
- Procedures for withdrawing candidacy;
- Guidelines for proposing a measure or bylaws amendment;
- Guidelines for submitting arguments and rebuttals on proposed actions; and
- Campaigning guidelines and rules.

On or before the March Board Meeting, the Board shall vote to approve the Election Information Packet. The approved Election Information Packet will be incorporated into the Election Policy. Each year, when the Board approves a new Election Information Packet, the Election Information Packet from the previous year shall become null.

2. Election Duties

The following Election Duties are to be performed by the Committee and Board Administrator, unless otherwise stated or determined by the Board. The process should ensure secret ballots.

2.1 Ballot Packet Preparation
The Committee is responsible for estimating how many paper ballots might be needed for the election and for ensuring all information included in the ballot packet conforms to the requirements of the Bylaws, the Policy, the Election Information Packet, and any other relevant governing documents. Once approved by the Committee, the Board Administrator is responsible for overseeing preparation of ballot packets and coordinating approval of the ballot packets by the Board Chair (or other Board designee not on the ballot). Approval to be completed prior to ballot packets being uploaded, as provided in the Election Timeline.

Pursuant to Bylaws Article 5, California law and this Policy, the following information ***must*** be included in ballot packets:

- The number of votes required to meet quorum requirements;
- The time by which the ballot must be received to be counted; and
- The percent of votes required to pass a measure (only for elections other than the election of Directors or advisory surveys)

Other information that must be included in the ballot packet:

- Number of Eligible Voters
- Statement of SNFC policy that no SNFC money may be used for campaigning, except for costs of distributing election information to members and promoting the election
- Identification of candidates recommended by the Nominations Committee and nominated by the Board

- Candidate Statements received in accordance with the Election Information Packet and Election Timeline
- When the proposed action is election of Board Members, the names of nominees shall be listed in random order with a choice for approval, including the maximum number of nominees to select.
- All proposed actions with opportunity to specify approval, disapproval, or abstention of a proposed action
- Pro and con arguments and rebuttals for measures and bylaws amendments, as approved and received in accordance with the Election Information Packet and Election Timeline
- Instructions for completing the online ballot
- Instructions for completing and returning a paper ballot to the SNFC premises
- Contact information for the Committee or the Board Administrator
- Procedures for challenging election results

2.2 Ballots Received at SNFC Premises

On the day voting for an election commences, the Board Administrator will deliver printed paper ballots to the customer service desk. Printed ballots shall be made available for any Co-op member wanting to submit a paper ballot or who did not receive an electronic voting invitation. The Board Administrator shall conspicuously place a box on SNFC premises for collecting paper ballots. The Board Administrator is responsible for ensuring the security of the ballot box during the election and removal of the ballot box on the last day of the election at the close of voting. The Board Administrator is responsible for transmitting paper ballots collected on SNFC's premises to the election administration provider, in accordance with SNFC's contract with the provider.

2.3 Results Reporting

In the case of any election resulting in a tie vote, the election administration provider shall use a method of random selection to determine the winner.

The election administration provider shall provide the vote results no later than 6 days after the election ends (allows time for paper ballots to be mailed next day to election administration provider and inputted). These results shall be shared with the Committee Chair and the Board Chair (or designee if Chair is a candidate) and posted in the store and online as soon as possible. The Election Committee Chair shall present the election report containing information provided by the election administration provider and SNFC staff, to the Board at the October board meeting. Upon the Board's adoption of the election report results, including any amendment(s) to the Bylaws, approved measure(s), advisory survey results, or any other matter(s) decided by mailed or online ballot, a copy of such shall be conspicuously posted at SNFC premises and online not later than two (2) days thereafter.

2.4 Election Disputes

Any and all disputes, including matters concerning eligibility of a nominated candidate during or after an election, campaign conduct before or during a vote, or election administration, are to be presented to the Committee or Board Administrator. Within 72 hours of receiving notice of a dispute, the Committee and Board Administrator shall draft a summary of the dispute and recommend a proposed action to the Board. The

Board shall resolve the dispute in a manner that best serves the interests of SNFC, including, without limitation, in the event of need or a conflict of interest, referring the dispute to a third-party arbiter, such as legal counsel, for resolution.

Members may only challenge the results of an election in which they voted. The last day to dispute an election is included in the election timeline.

3. Other Types of Elections

Elections to Recall a Director, Fill a Board Vacancy, Vote on a Measure and/or Bylaws Changes are discussed in the Election Information Packet. These types of elections may be conducted on an "as needed" basis, in accordance with the Bylaws. They are not required to conform to the Election Timeline adopted in the Election Information Packet. However, all elections must conform to the campaign guidelines and rules contained in the Election Information Packet, as adopted by the Board and incorporated into this Policy.

[1] "Elections" include, but are not limited to, all actions requiring a vote by the Members.

[2] See Bylaws Article 5, §10.06 for specific requirements.

[3] Nothing prohibits the Board from scheduling a vote on any of these three actions on a schedule separate from the general election timeline.

[4] Pursuant to Bylaws §5.10, elections may be conducted using electronic transmissions.

[5] The election timeline shall include the information listed in Appendix A.

Appendix A

The election timeline shall provide the dates for ***at least*** all the following information:

- Deadline when members must be active members (Bylaws §2.04(a) and eligible to be a candidate in the Election
- Deadline when Candidate Statement of Interest is due to the Nominations Committee
- Deadline for Nominations Committee to recommend candidates to the Board
- Deadline for Board to confirm candidate nomination
- Deadline when petitions to run are due for candidates seeking nomination by petition
- Deadline when Declaration of Candidacy and Code of Conduct forms are due for all candidates
- Deadline for submission of candidate statements
- Deadline for Board to certify measures and bylaws amendments for the ballot
- Deadline for public posting of ballot measures and bylaws amendments
- Deadline for submission of pro and con arguments
- Deadline for posting of approved pro and con arguments
- Deadline for submission of rebuttals to pro and con arguments
- Deadline for posting approved rebuttals to pro and con arguments
- Date by which members must be active members (Bylaws §2.04(a)) and are eligible to vote in the election
- Date when candidates and sponsors and opponents of measures can begin campaigning
- Date electronic voting opens with online ballot packet and when paper ballots are available in the store at the Customer Service Desk
- Last day to vote electronically or drop paper ballot in the store at the Customer Service Desk
- Day results will be reported to the Board Chair (or delegee) and Election Committee Chair by election administration provider
- Day election results will be publicly posted
- Final day to file a challenge to the election
- Board meeting date where results are reported and accepted by the Board