

2026 VOTERS GUIDE



Orcas Power & Light Cooperative

Dear OPALCO Member-Owner:

This is your 2026 Voter's Guide. Within, you will find:

- information on the candidates for election
- your official ballot (and a link to vote online)
- ballot secrecy envelope & reply envelope (for voting by mail)
- information on our in-person Annual Meeting

All ballots must be received by mail or online
no later than 10:00 AM PST on May 4, 2026.

All members vote for all open positions
regardless of home island.

*VOTING MAKES YOU ELIGIBLE TO WIN
ONE OF OUR GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES*



**ANNUAL MEETING IN-PERSON
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 3-6 pm
LOPEZ CENTER FOR COMMUNITY
AND THE ARTS**



VOTE ONE OF TWO WAYS:

1. **VOTE ONLINE.** OPALCO offers secure electronic voting in partnership with Survey and Ballot Systems (SBS). This is the preferred method of voting.
2. **VOTE BY US MAIL.** See the enclosed ballot for instructions. Be sure to SIGN THE FRONT OF YOUR REPLY ENVELOPE. Without your signature, your vote will not count.

WHO GETS TO VOTE?

Each *membership* gets one vote, no matter how many meters are attached to the membership and regardless of how many people are named on the membership. One member: one vote.

HOW MANY CANDIDATES CAN WE VOTE FOR?

For each position that is open, members may vote for one candidate. In 2026, there are TWO open positions: one open position in District 1 (San Juan, et al), and one open position in District 2 (Orcas, et al). Vote in every district for all open positions regardless of your home district.

WHY VOTE?

OPALCO members are owners of their electric cooperative. You have the power to elect your Co-op Board of Directors who set the rates and make the policies.

VOTERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO WIN BIG PRIZES: ELECTRIC TOOLS, CORDLESS VACUUMS & MORE!

District 1 (San Juan, Pearl, Henry, Brown and Speiden islands) candidates - one open position (VOTE FOR ONE):

- Dwight Colley
- Laura Derevensky
- Drew Gislason
- Richard Goodhart
- Adrian Kilpatrick

District 2 (Orcas, Armitage, Blakely, Obstruction, Big Double, Little Double and Fawn islands) candidates - one open position (VOTE FOR ONE):

- Chuks Onwuneme (Incumbent)
- Conor Anderson
- Rick Fant
- Michael Readey
- Laura Stern

DISTRICT I CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

DWIGHT COLLEY

After serving in the U. S. Marine Corps and retiring from a 26-year career in law enforcement (municipal, U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General) and having already completed a doctorate degree in psychology, I built a clinical psychology practice in Charlottesville, Virginia.



At the same time, feeling a need to give back to the community using the knowledge and skills I had acquired, I served six years (last two as chair) on a five-county, multi-jurisdictional community mental health board, overseeing the operations of a staff of 500 mental health workers and a yearly budget of \$14 million. Additionally, I was a member of the county Human Rights Committee and later founded the citizens' County Police Department Advisory Board, in Charlottesville, Virginia. After retiring to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, I served on the board overseeing the operations of a non-profit winter homeless shelter program, coordinating the activities of 13 churches of differing denominations.

I have lived on San Juan Island for eight years. Since then I spent three years serving on the San Juan County Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Board (last two as chair) and, during the same period, I was an active EMT with San Juan Island EMS. Three years ago, I retired as an EMT after my election as a Fire Commissioner for San Juan Island Fire District #3.

My past involvement and leadership on large multi-jurisdictional boards dealing with complex financial, personnel and procurement issues gives me the broad depth of experience to bring people, both career and volunteer, together to accomplish shared goals.

DISTRICT I CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

LAURA DEREVENSKY

Laura has lived on San Juan Island for 5 years, in the house that her grandfather built. She absorbed a love of the island by spending summers here with her maternal and paternal grandparents throughout her childhood. Now that she has retired, and is finally able to live on San Juan Island full time, she hopes to contribute to the community as part of the OPALCO board. Laura graduated from MIT with a S.B in physics and a Ph.D. in electrical engineering. Following a post doc in NY state, where she met her husband, the two of them moved to Tacoma, where she took up a position as a professor in the Pacific Lutheran University electrical engineering program, until the University decided, for financial reasons, to eliminate the program. At that time, she and her husband returned to NY state, where he still owned an auto repair business and where his parents were declining in health. She found joy and fulfillment, unexpectedly, in teaching physics at a local high school, and became a New York State master teacher. Throughout this time, she, her husband and children spent much of their summer months on San Juan Island with her parents.



As an OPALCO board member, Laura would focus on the core mission of providing reliable, affordable and safe energy. Continued review of the rate design may be necessary to achieve this. She supports clean energy projects, which will be crucial to providing the energy the island will need in the future. She believes that early communication with rate payers is essential for all projects, including clearing of rights of way, and should be an early part of the planning process, with mitigation part of any project plans.

DISTRICT I CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

DREW GISLASON

Drew grew up on San Juan Island in the 1970s (back when OPALCO was nick-named the Occasional Power and Light Company due to many outages). Through strong leadership, OPALCO has greatly improved since that day. After college, Drew moved back here with his wife in 1993 and raised three children on the island.



In 2003, Drew founded a high-tech company in Friday Harbor, San Juan Software, which focuses on the "Internet of Things" and has worked with companies like Trane, Itron, PG&E and Texas Instruments to bring connected products to market. Drew continues in his role as president of San Juan Software. Drew also worked for companies such as Datalight, where he built an OS, and QNX, which makes high-performance embedded solutions. Drew attended the University of Washington, where he studied computer science.

Drew has been involved in the Friday Harbor community for many years, including 4H at the county fair, guiding his kids to raise and show sheep. He also built a dock for the sailing club, and for three years led the high school senior class fundraiser.

"I believe power should be clean, reliable and inexpensive. OPALCO faces challenging years ahead as electricity becomes more costly (currently rising 5-6% per year). We must prepare for a greater demand while power becomes potentially limited or significantly more expensive from the mainland. I am an out-of-box thinker, good at problem solving and always start with 'yes'. I then cooperate with others to develop and implement creative, reliable solutions. We shall need ways to both conserve power and to create local, renewable, clean power generation capacity."

DISTRICT I CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

RICHARD GOODHART

Rich has lived in the San Juans since 2011. Not having background experience specifically connected to an electric utility, he does possess skills, knowledge, and has a generalist's enthusiasm for technical processes that can benefit OPALCO's Board.



Rich is currently a commissioner for the Port of Friday Harbor, which is entrusted with a multi-million dollar budget and deals with many state and federal agencies. Rich retired from a 33 year career in aviation which included managing an airport fixed-base-operation, being a captain for a Fortune 100 company's world-wide flight department, an Alaska bush pilot, a flight instructor, and a charter pilot.

For many, aviation is a career where you are away flying but then home for extended periods. During off-time Rich was able to tackle several permitted building projects where he completed the work of all construction trades — three on land and two boats, one of which is on its second ocean voyage with new owners. Rich has a BA from Evergreen State College.

“OPALCO has a difficult task — provide reliable power to its members yet do it as cheaply as possible and in a way that impacts our beautiful islands as little as possible. I have looked at several recent budget reports and the escalating costs and issues are large but can be dealt with, like any big task, by taking one-bite-at-a-time. While people with specific technical knowledge are necessary, sometimes it is helpful for a board to have at least one member able to step back and look at the whole picture — a generalist. I am committed to that task.”

DISTRICT I CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

ADRIAN KILPATRICK

Adrian Kilpatrick was born and raised on San Juan Island. After a long hiatus of living in multiple places around America and the World, Adrian finally returned to Friday Harbor during the winter of 2016 to purchase property and fall back into becoming a full-time island resident. Since returning to San Juan Island one of Adrian's main priorities has been to become more involved in the internal processes that keep our island community thriving. This has led him to roles on several committees and boards which have been instrumental in creating a comprehensive vision for the future of San Juan County. This also led Adrian to run for a seat on the San Juan County Council in 2024. His time volunteering and running for county council helped highlight some of the major issues that our island community is currently experiencing and will potentially face moving into the future.



Providing stable renewable energy at low costs are going to be one of the islands biggest challenges over the next decade. To continue providing electric services at rates that middle and low income islanders are able to afford, it is going to require a huge commitment from OPALCO and the island community to move forward on greenlighting renewable energy projects, and to continue its negotiations with Bonneville Power Administration and other renewable energy providers in the state of Washington to provide the best prices for electricity. Adrian, being a working millennial, is interested in finding solutions that appeal to working class individuals and the future generations of San Juan Islanders. This means prioritizing future energy projects that have manageable time frames and will provide savings/security to OPALCO members, creating clear avenues of communication between OPALCO and the community in order to maintain public approval in the development of new energy projects, and by creating partnerships with existing non profits and local government agencies in order to create a collaborative environment that favors expediency over congestion.

DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

CHUKS ONWUNEME (INCUMBENT)

I am a highly experienced and dedicated professional with a passion for sustainable energy, and a background in engineering and technology. My journey began in Nigeria, where I grew up learning from my father, a power systems engineer who worked on hydro-power generation systems. This early exposure to the field sparked my interest and I knew from a young age that I wanted to follow in his footsteps. In high school, I discovered computer programming and quickly became engrossed in this new field.



After graduating top of my class, I was awarded an academic scholarship to study Computer Science and Engineering at The University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). While in college, I worked as a software engineer at IBM, building systems and software that spanned across various IBM ecosystems. Upon graduation, I joined Nokia, a Finland-based mobile and telecoms giant, where I helped build the Symbian smartphone operating system, a highly ubiquitous smartphone operating system. My time at Nokia exposed me to various opportunities to solve very challenging engineering problems, an experience I took with me when I left the company after 9 years.

I later moved to the Pacific Northwest, and with the healthtech company I co-founded called Pillsy, I co-invented and helped create one of the world's first Internet-of-Things (IOT) smart pill bottles that helped people adhere to their medications. This company later became Optimize Health, a modern Remote Care platform for healthcare providers.

During the pandemic, I chose to lay roots at Orcas Island and quickly learned about OPALCO's mission, as well as Rock Island's. Given my strong desire for solving complex engineering problems and my passion for sustainable energy, I can appreciate the magnitude of the challenges ahead for these organizations and I am committed to working towards a more sustainable future for our community.

DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

CONOR ANDERSON

About:

Conor Anderson spent every summer on Orcas between the ages of 4 and 17. His family has owned property in Deer Harbor for almost 35 years, where he and Alexandra Anderson have lived since the Fall of 2024. His 15-year career as an independent governance, strategy, and leadership consultant has given him opportunities to work directly with boards and managers of companies large and small, nonprofit and for profit, across many industries. He graduated from UC Berkeley with dual majors in economics and psychology in 2009. He graduated with honors from UC Berkeley's Haas Business School in 2023.



Platform:

If elected, Conor will partner with the Board and General Manager to serve OPALCO's members according to the following principles:

Affordability: what cost-control measures are in place, how effectively are community dollars being invested, etc.?

Transparency: are we providing sufficient information on "the why" and "the how" rather than just "the what"?

Accountability: in what ways can OPALCO better demonstrate its commitment to serving its members?

Message:

Conor is not "an activist", and at this juncture, there are few promises or guarantees he can make in good faith. However, he has thoughtfully listened to some of the membership's concerns, and he can promise to act as a faithful advocate of the communities OPALCO serves. He has long been an outspoken proponent of board education, and he looks forward to developing a deep understanding of OPALCO's industry, environment, strategy, and operations. What he currently lacks in industry expertise, he hopes to make up for with experience in nonprofit governance.

As with any partnership, communication is key in maintaining trust and moving forward together, and Conor would be honored to assist in further strengthening the partnership between OPALCO's members, GM, and Board.

DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

RICK FANT

Rick Fant is a 25+ year resident of Orcas, OPALCO member and local business owner; in love with the San Juan Islands and its awesome natural beauty.



Rick is an experienced board member currently serving on multiple international and local boards and former board Chair and hands-on, detail-oriented committee member. Rick has had 40 years of an international career managing and leading large technology organizations including Microsoft, Vodafone and Mozilla (Firefox) with an emphasis on building products that include respect for privacy and the environment in a complex world.

Rick believes the challenges of decarbonization pushing the electric grid are real and believes that sustainable, low-cost supply of electric power is essential for our island community to have a year round economy that works.

DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

MICHAEL READEY

My goal as an Opalco Director is to bring my expertise in engineering, business and sustainability to create the energy future we want and need. As a relative new member of the Orcas Community, I soon learned about the challenges we face, notably a rising demand for electricity that is outpacing supply, and a power infrastructure highly dependent upon on the mainland. This trend will continue, creating potential shortages and higher costs if we don't plan and implement an alternative path forward. My aim as Director is to work with the community towards electricity that is readily available and at a cost we can all afford, while also meeting our climate goals as we transition to a carbonfree energy future.



My wife, Mary Beth, and I recently moved to Orcas Island full-time after visiting for several years. We came from Boulder, Colorado, where I was a faculty member in the Engineering Management Program at the University of Colorado Boulder. I continue in that capacity as an Assistant Professor Adjoint, teaching online courses on Sustainable Engineering and the Circular Economy.

Prior to CU, I spent 25 years in industry, working for both large, multinational companies and small engineering businesses. My experience ranges from developing innovative materials technologies to transforming early-stage R&D initiatives into viable new ventures, navigating organizational and regulatory challenges along the way. Passionate about environmental and social responsibility, I have devoted my career to developing engineered solutions that support carbon-free energy, cleaner air, and cleaner water for a rapidly growing world.

I obtained my BS and MS in Ceramic Engineering from Ohio State University, and a PhD in Materials Science from Case Western Reserve University. On the Island, you can find me tending my organic veggie garden, hiking and bicycling around the amazing hills of Orcas.

DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE - ONE OPEN POSITION

LAURA STERN

Laura Stern is a full-time Orcas resident and homeowner since 2019.



Laura is an experienced CEO and Board Director, bringing over twenty-five years of operational, financial and organizational experience in the renewable energy industry. She is the Head of US Tax Credits for Marex (NASDAQ:MRX), leading the transferable renewable energy tax credit business.

As co-CEO of Nautilus Solar Energy, LLC, which she co-founded in 2006, Ms.

Stern grew the company from inception to become one of the leading solar developers and project owners in the US, through its successful acquisition. Under her leadership, Nautilus Solar developed, finance, owned and operated over \$1.5 billion of solar projects throughout the US.

Ms. Stern has executed over \$7.5 billion of power, energy and infrastructure investments. As a project finance banker, she originated and structured renewable energy financings in the wind, hydro and biomass sectors. Ms. Stern began her career with PricewaterhouseCoopers, advising the Philippine Government on the privatization of its power and water sectors. She graduated with honors from Harvard University (BA) and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Economics (MA).

She serves as an Independent Board Director for SOLV Energy. Ms. Stern was the Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of the Board of Directors for the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA). She was a Board Director for the Coalition for Community Solar Access (CCSA) and the Solar and Storage Industries Institute, with experience on Board Finance, Audit, Compensation and Governance Committees.

Laura is a member of the Orcas Island Yacht Club and Pickleball Club. She enjoys spending time with her three children and dog, Tito, and hiking, biking and kayaking the San Juans. She looks forward to bringing increased reliability, economic discipline and optimization and a greater mix of renewable energy, including community solar and storage, to OPALCO's members.

OPALCO ANNUAL MEETING



Electric Vehicles

Energy Tips!

MAY 8
3-6 PM
Lopez Center for
Community and
the Arts



Games

SWAG!

Food!



Celebrating
local power!

Prizes!

Bucket Trucks



Why make the **SWITCH** to a ductless heat pump?



Two appliances in One:

A ductless heat pump can heat & cool. The function of the pump can be adjusted to match the needs of each season!

Added Convenience:

Easily controlled with a remote, comes with added tech: sensors to monitor temperature, modulating fans and motors.

Lower Operating Costs: Can heat/cool your space at a fraction of the price of baseboard, wall, and ceiling heat or electric furnaces.

**EASY TO APPLY AND QUALIFY FOR UP TO
\$100,000 PER OPALCO MEMBERSHIP
*new construction now eligible!**

Find out more about ductless heat pumps and
other eligible Switch It Up! Projects at

www.opalco.com/switchitup

Project Pal is an OPALCO assistance program funded by members, for members, and distributed during the heating season (November-April). Members can interact with Project Pal in 2 ways: **1)** by donating funds to support the program, or **2)** by applying to receive assistance

Your donation can help another OPALCO member pay their heating bill when it is at its highest. There are many ways to donate:

- opt-in to the Pal Round-Up Program, where your monthly bill will be rounded to the nearest dollar. The extra cents will go towards the PAL award fund every month
- Make a one-time contribution of any amount you would like
- Become a PAL Business partner

Gift certificates are also available and can be directed to any OPALCO member, regardless of need, anonymously or signed, or simply made out to Project PAL.

Donate to Project Pal today to help a member in need pay their heating bill. Give a one time contribution or round up your monthly bill!

www.opalco.com/donate



PROJECT

PAL

OPALCO ANNUAL MEETING

May 8, 2026, 3-6 pm



JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEMBER FESTIVAL

Join us in celebrating member-owned local power! Come on by for free swag, kids activities, informational booths, EV showcase, a BBQ, bucket truck rides, and a raffle!

May 8th: 3-6 pm

Lopez Center for Community and the Arts

Get the latest on OPALCO's energy programs, long-range plans, solar projects, Rock Island developments, and more!

Shuttle from ferry landing to community center will be available for inter-island ferry commuters



OPALCO

Co-op Run. Community Powered.