



## Legislation Text

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A MOTION providing direction to the conservation futures citizen oversight committee on a priority for allocating conservation futures tax levy funds.

WHEREAS, state law declares that it is in the best interest of the state to maintain, preserve, conserve and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands for the production of food, fiber and forest crops and to ensures the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the state and its citizens, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.210 authorizes the county to acquire property rights to protect, preserve, maintain, improve, restore, limit the future use of, or other otherwise conserve, selected open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timber land, and

WHEREAS, property rights acquired under this authorization are defined as conservation futures, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.230 authorizes the use of a property tax levy to fund the acquisition of conservation futures and the maintenance and operation of acquired properties, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.240 authorizes counties to establish a special conservation futures fund to which the levy proceeds are credited, and

WHEREAS, King County has established a conservation futures tax levy and fund, and

WHEREAS, King County is required to establish a process to help ensure, over time, that the distribution of the tax levy is throughout the county, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. chapter 26.12 establishes an annual process for distribution of the tax levy to acquire open space lands, including green spaces, greenbelts, wildlife habitat and trail rights-of-way, and

WHEREAS, the process includes a citizen oversight committee that makes project and funding

allocation recommendations for each project to the executive, and

WHEREAS, the executive makes a project and funding recommendation as part of the budget process, and

WHEREAS, King County has entered into an interlocal agreement with the King County flood control district to provide services to the district, and as service provider to the district is working with the district to complete a system-wide improvement framework ("SWIF") for the Green river, and

WHEREAS, the Green river SWIF will improve flood protection for current and future generations, in a way that builds economic, ecological and community resiliency, and

WHEREAS, the Green-Duwamish river watershed is home to salmonid species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, valuable agricultural resource lands, regional transportation infrastructure, and recreational trail networks, and commercial/industrial economic assets that contribute to over one-eighth of Washington state's annual gross domestic product, and

WHEREAS, the lower Green river has been highly developed and engineered over time, with approximately seventy-five percent of the floodplain covered with impervious surfaces, and

WHEREAS, the King County flood control district manages approximately eighteen miles of levees along the lower Green river, and

WHEREAS, the SWIF process is a collaboration with the King County flood control district; the county; the cities of Tukwila, Renton, Kent and Auburn; the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe; state agencies; federal agencies; water resource inventory area 9; the business community including Boeing, Washington Realtors, Master Builders Association and NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association; and environmental groups including the Nature Conservancy and American Rivers, and

WHEREAS, vegetation overhanging the river provides many habitat benefits for salmonids, including protection from birds and other predators from above; providing shade from solar radiation; keeping water temperatures down; providing prey in the form of terrestrial insects to promote growth; and contributing large

woody debris over the long-term to the system, and

WHEREAS, there is very limited tree cover in the majority of the lower Green river and it is important to restore riparian tree cover wherever possible to promote shading and cover, and

WHEREAS, high water temperatures are a chronic problem in the lower Green river, which leads to die-off of endangered salmonid species, and

WHEREAS, there are opportunities to improve shade conditions throughout the lower Green river system by restoring shade trees and other riparian vegetation, and

WHEREAS, the conservation futures allocation process requires a project to be sponsored and forwarded by the jurisdiction in which the project is located, either individually or in partnership with other jurisdictions because of shared interests, and

WHEREAS, there are opportunities along the lower Green river to partner with cities, tribes local landowners and businesses to complete a project or projects that will preserve open space and provide shading vegetation along the edge of the river, and

WHEREAS, submittal of specific projects and locations along the lower Green river, for preservation and restoration of riparian habitat, should be based on best available science, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 26.12.010 allows the council to adopt a motion providing direction to the conservation futures citizen oversight committee on priorities for evaluating project applications, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 26.12.025 establishes criteria for conservation futures project selection, which provides: "wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve; salmon habitat and aquatic resources; scenic resources; community separator; historic or cultural resources; urban passive-use natural area or greenbelt; park or open space system addition; and transfer of development rights program implementation. Additional criteria may include: passive recreation; education/interpretive opportunity; threat of loss of open space resources; ownership complexity; partnerships; stewardship and maintenance; and any other criteria consistent with RCW 84.34.020," and

WHEREAS, use of conservation future tax levy funds for purchase of property rights for preservation and restoration of riparian habitat meets the criteria in K.C.C. 26.12.025 for project selection, and

WHEREAS, the use of conservation future tax levy funds for the purpose of preservation and restoration of riparian habitat is not intended to meet funding obligations for mitigation requirements arising out of capital projects that are not projects funded by the conservation future tax levy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council establishes as a priority for the conservation futures citizen oversight committee's consideration during the annual project selection and funding recommendation process, one or more projects that includes the purchase of property rights for the purpose of riparian habitat preservation and restoration along the lower Green river, to preserve existing stands and allow planting of large trees to provide shade to the river.

B. The department of natural resources and parks, water and land resources division, is requested to work with local landowners and jurisdictions in which properties reflecting this priority are located, in submitting project proposals that meet this priority, as part of the 2015 conservation futures tax levy funds selection process provided for in K.C.C. 26.12.010.