



King County

Dow Constantine

King County Executive

401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 800

Seattle, WA 98104-1818

206-263-9600 Fax 206-296-0194

TTY Relay: 711

www.kingcounty.gov

April 27, 2023

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits two proposed Ordinances and a related Motion that, if enacted, would further advance and accelerate the work of King County's Land Conservation Initiative (LCI). Approval of this proposed legislation will reduce barriers to participation in the Conservation Futures grant program and help secure conserved lands as they transition into public ownership and stewardship.

This legislative package includes the following proposed legislation:

- a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, reduce the required match for the Conservation Futures grant program from 50 percent to 25 percent, expand eligible uses for the funds, and make scheduling refinements and other minor clarifications;
- a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, adopt an updated Interlocal Agreement and amendment templates for cities that reflect the changes to Conservation Futures policies; and
- a proposed Motion that would, if approved, update the project criteria to reflect additions to project eligibility.

Conservation Future grant program partners have long indicated that the 50 percent grant match requirement for Conservation Futures funding is a barrier to participation in the program. It can force difficult choices between additional conservation and other funding needs. This legislative proposal builds on the decades-long success of the program by scaling match requirements to be more consistent with available resources in the region. The proposed changes would enable partners to increase investments in capital improvements, restoration, and site maintenance. This in turn will enhance the benefits of new open space to people and the environment.

The proposed match reduction from 50 percent to 25 percent retains the 100 percent match waiver incentive that the Council approved in 2019 for projects in underserved areas of the county.

The Honorable Dave Upthegrove

April 27, 2023

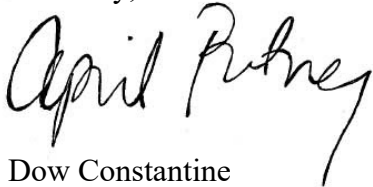
Page 2

In addition to advancing the LCI, these proposed revisions help to support the Strategic Climate Action Plan by protecting urban greenspaces and forestlands throughout the County that help to store carbon and mitigate heat impacts, and the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan goal of prioritizing new open space acquisitions in areas where needs are greatest. In addition, the Clean Water, Healthy Habitat Initiative is supported by protecting forestlands that cool our streams and filter water, and by ensuring close-to-home open space access opportunities for all.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed legislation. This legislation will help the County more quickly deliver on the promises made in November 2022, when voters approved Proposition 1 and restored the Conservation Futures property tax levy rate. The proposed legislation builds on years of work by the Conservation Futures Advisory Group, the Open Space Equity Cabinet, and outreach efforts from the many connected strategic plans that help to inform this work.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Mo McBroom, Deputy Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4520.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff
 Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council
Shannon Braddock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Karan Gill, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Mo McBroom, Deputy Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)