



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2004-0510, **Version:** 1

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A MOTION expressing the intent of the council to enhance incentives for watershed protection, to provide technical assistance and staffing in support of flexible alternatives to fixed critical areas regulations and to renew funding support for the King Conservation District.

WHEREAS, the county uses a mix of regulatory and nonregulatory tools to protect critical areas, and

WHEREAS, these tools include tax incentive programs like the public benefit rating system, public education and technical assistance, and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 15028, adopted by the council on September 27, 2004, recently established two new categories for the public benefit rating system known as "watershed protection" and "rural stewardship" to provide tax incentives for protecting forest cover and carrying out site-specific best management practices to protect critical areas, and

WHEREAS, additional amendments to the king county code are needed to establish criteria for the new watershed protection and rural stewardship categories and to update other public benefit rating system categories, and

WHEREAS, the Waterways 2000 Program successfully demonstrated how community partnerships and direct assistance to landowners in preparing public benefit rating system applications could make it easier for landowners to access the public benefit rating system program, and

WHEREAS, the current application fee for the public benefit rating system program is two hundred dollars, and

WHEREAS, the critical areas ordinance provides for rural stewardship plans, farm plans and forest

management plans as flexible alternatives to fixed regulations to protect critical areas and to identify best management practices to protect water quality, and

WHEREAS, the critical areas ordinance requires the county to provide up-front classes, technical assistance, and model plans to facilitate landowner access to these programs, and

WHEREAS, the council will adopt a budget for 2005 in late November; and

WHEREAS, the King Conservation District, a special purpose district authorized under chapter 89.08 RCW, has been working with landowners to develop farm plans for over fifty years, and

WHEREAS, the five-dollar-per-parcel assessment that supports the King Conservation District assessment will sunset in 2005 without action by the council to renew it, and

WHEREAS, the King Conservation District assessment is applied to properties in both urban and rural King County, including areas within cities, and

WHEREAS, five dollars per parcel is the existing statutory limit for the King Conservation District assessment;

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

A. As part of the 2005 budget adoption, it is the intent of the council to identify current expense funding to support a waiver of application fees for the public benefit rating system in 2005;

B. As part of the 2005 budget adoption, the council will provide adequate staffing resources to the public benefit rating system program to support community partnerships and direct assistance in preparing applications, using an approach modeled after the successful Waterways 2000 program;

C. It is the intent of the council to provide expeditious review of an ordinance updating public benefit rating system categories so that landowners can access the new Watershed Protection and Rural Stewardship Plan categories during the upcoming application cycle;

C. As part of the 2005 State Legislative Agenda, the council will seek changes to state law that would streamline the public benefit rating system application process and enhance available public benefit rating

system incentives;

D. As part of the 2005 budget adoption process, the council will ensure that adequate funding is available to provide technical assistance, classes, education, and model plans to facilitate landowner participation in rural stewardship plans, farm plans and forest stewardship plans; and

E. It is the intent of the council to renew the King Conservation District assessment during 2005 to provide continued support to develop Farm Plans.