



Legislation Text

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Clerk 02/05/2015

A MOTION providing direction to the conservation futures citizen oversight committee on a priority for allocating conservation futures tax levy funds near the Sammamish river and certain regional trails.

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 assure 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, 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, 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, conservation futures tax levy funds were used to purchase a conservation easement in the city of Bothell in 1996 for the purpose of preserving open space along the Sammamish river, and

WHEREAS, the conservation easement allowed the continued operation of the existing recreational land use, and

WHEREAS, the land along the Sammamish river provides recreational uses, scenic resources and open space as well as important habitat value and ecological benefit, and

WHEREAS, there may be opportunities to partner with cities, the state, private entities, local

landowners and citizens to purchase additional property rights that would preserve additional open space and recreational land along the Sammamish river, the Burke-Gilman trail, the Sammamish River trail, the Tolt Pipeline trail and the Eastside Rail Corridor, and

WHEREAS, use of conservation future tax levy funds for purchase of property rights for preservation of existing open space and recreational land meets the criteria in K.C.C. 26.12.025 for project selection;

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

The council establishes as a priority for the conservation futures citizen oversight committee consideration during the annual project selection and funding recommendation process, one or more projects that includes the purchase of property rights near or adjacent to already preserved properties, for the purpose of preservation of existing recreational uses, view corridors and open space along the Sammamish river, the Burke-Gilman trail, the Sammamish River trail, the Tolt Pipeline trail and the Eastside Rail Corridor, in order to promote the enhancement of existing open space uses, and to preserve scenic resources and recreational land uses.