

An Ordinance levying a property tax pursuant to the authority of RCW 84.34.230 and establishing a Conservation Futures Property Tax Fund

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.010 declares that it is in the best interest of the state to maintain, preserve, 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, Skagit County has a significant quantity of farmland and critical areas in need of preservation; and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.230 authorizes a county to levy an amount not to exceed six and one-quarter cents per one-thousand dollars of assessed valuation against the assessed valuation of all taxable property within the county for the purpose of acquisition of future development rights for preservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.240 allows the Board of County Commissioners to establish by resolution a special fund which may termed a conservation fund.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE SKAGIT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THAT A NEW CHAPTER IS ADDED TO THE SKAGIT COUNTY CODE AS FOLLOWS:

CONSERVATION FUTURES FUND

Section 1. Purpose.

It is hereby declared to be in the public interest and to be a county purpose to adopt and impose a property tax levy as authorized by RCW 84.34.230 and to create a special fund to which all such levy proceeds shall be credited. The purpose of the fund created is to acquire interests or rights in real property for the preservation of farm, agricultural land, and critical areas.

Section 2. Property tax levy imposed.

Pursuant to RCW 84.34.230, there is hereby imposed a property tax levy to be applied against all taxable property within Skagit County. The levy shall be applied at a rate of six and one-quarter cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation.

Section 3. Fund established.

A special fund is hereby established, as provided for under RCW 84.34.240, which shall be known as the Conservation Futures Fund #122 and to which will be credited all taxes levied under this ordinance. It is further ordered that all monies collected through the Agricultural Land Mitigation/Preservation Fund #121 as established under Resolution #14873 shall be transferred into the Conservation Futures Fund #122, that Fund #121 be closed, and future receipts of monies to mitigate the conversion of agricultural land for commercial development or to preserve agricultural land be deposited into Fund #122.

Section 4. Use of fund.

Amounts placed in the Conservation Futures Fund shall be used solely to acquire rights and interests in farm, agricultural land and critical areas on a voluntary basis, as established in chapter 84.34 RCW and Skagit County Code. The purpose is to protect, preserve, maintain, improve, restore, limit the future use of, or otherwise conserve the property for public use or enjoyment. Included are debt issuance's and debt service costs related to bond monies and repayment in instances where bonds are issued to further these purposes. Until withdrawn for such use, the monies accumulated in the fund may be invested in interest bearing securities. It shall be the joint responsibility of the Skagit County Treasurer and the County Auditor to account for all aspects of this Fund. Any money remaining in the Fund upon Fund closure shall be transferred as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.

Section 5. Establishment of a conservation futures program advisory board.

Effective January 1, 1997, the Board of County Commissioners shall appoint a conservation futures program advisory board to implement the provisions of this ordinance and the requirements found in Title 14 of the Skagit County Code. The program advisory board shall recommend to the Board of County Commissioners criteria for selection of projects to be funded. The program advisory board shall also make annual or more frequent recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners for projects to be funded as part of the conservation futures program and shall develop strategic, long-term plans for the program. All recommendations of the program advisory board shall be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners for final action.

The program advisory board shall consist of seven voting members which shall include one representative of the Skagit Conservation District, one representative from the Skagitians to Preserve Farm Land, one representative from the Skagit Land Trust, one citizen representative from each County Commissioner District, and one citizen-at-large member. The County Finance Director and the County Planning Director shall serve as non-voting ex-officio members of this board. Terms of the program advisory board members shall be limited to four years. Any member may only serve a maximum of 3 consecutive terms. Initial terms shall be staggered so that no more than 33% of the board members' terms shall expire in any year.

Section 6. Severability.

If any provision of this chapter or its application to any person or circumstances are to be held invalid, the remainder of this chapter or any provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

Section 7. Effective date of tax levy.

The tax levy adopted herein shall be effective on the first day of January, 1997.

PASSED this 2nd day of December, 1996.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
SKAGIT COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Ted W Anderson
Ted W. Anderson, Chairman

Robert Hart
Robert Hart, Commissioner

Harvey Wolden
Harvey Wolden, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Debby Simms for
Debby Simms, Clerk
Skagit County Board of Commissioners

Approved as to form:

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Roxanne Michael, Director
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