

2080-S2

Sponsor(s): House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Parlette, Reams, Mulliken, Chandler and Boldt)

Brief Title: Regulating classification of lands with long-term commercial significance.

HB 2080-S2 - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS PASSED LEGISLATURE)

Provides that lands shall be classified as agricultural lands with long-term commercial significance if: (1) The lands are designated as agricultural lands under RCW 36.70A.170(1) by a county, city, or town planning under RCW 36.70A.040; (2) the lands are devoted primarily to agricultural uses specified under RCW 36.70A.030(2) and not used for residential purposes, industrial purposes, or other commercial purposes; (3) the county, city, or town has adopted its comprehensive plan and development regulations under RCW 36.70A.070 and 36.70A.040; and (4) the owner files an application for this status with the county assessor.

Declares that the assessed valuation of agricultural lands with long-term commercial significance shall be one-half of the value of such lands established under RCW 84.40.030 or the value established under RCW 84.34.065, whichever is lower.

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2080-S2

May 19, 1997

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, Second Substitute House Bill No. 2080 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to agricultural lands with long-term commercial significance for the production of food or other agricultural products;"

Second Substitute House Bill No. 2080 would have established an additional type of current use valuation for agricultural lands, "Agricultural Lands with Long-Term Commercial Significance."

This would have allowed farmers to discontinue commercial farming and still enjoy the lower taxes associated with agricultural land. If such a land owner were to later withdraw the land from this new classification, the owner would not be subject to paying the back taxes that would otherwise have been paid under a different land classification (as current law requires). In essence this land gives a substantial tax break and encourages farms to be held for speculation and future development, rather than worked.

I understand the need to give land owners more choices and rewards in exchange for growth management. However, this statute would establish a bad precedent by allowing a relatively small number of property owners to avoid paying several years of saved taxes, interest on the tax savings, and avoidance of a penalty for early withdrawal if they later develop their agricultural land.

I prefer the favorable treatment agricultural lands receive in sections 31, 32, and 33 of Engrossed Senate Bill 6094 that was recommended by the Land Use Commission.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Second Substitute House Bill No. 2080 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Locke
Governor