

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1627

As Reported by House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to using revenues under the county conservation futures levy.

Brief Description: Using revenues under the county conservation futures levy.

Sponsors: Representatives Fromhold (co-prime sponsor), Dunn (co-prime sponsor), Ogden, Edmonds, Dunshee, Jarrett and Edwards.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/25/02, 1/30/02 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Increases the existing levy for county conservation futures from 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to 10 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.
- Encourages counties to use conservation futures as a tool for salmon recovery.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Doumit, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Eickmeyer, Jackley, McDermott and Upthegrove.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Ericksen, Orcutt and Pearson.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background:

Counties are authorized to impose a levy up to 6.25 cents per \$1,000 dollars of assessed valuation upon all taxable property in the county for the purpose of acquiring conservation futures. "Conservation futures" are the future development rights to property designated as open space, farm and agricultural land, and timber land. The decision to impose a county conservation future levy is made by the county legislative

authority.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The existing levy for county conservation futures is increased from 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to 10 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Counties are encouraged to use conservation futures as a tool for salmon recovery. Any rights or interest acquired in real property through conservation futures must be located within the assessing county.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill increases the existing levy for conservation futures by 3.75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The original bill would have created an additional levy of an additional 5.75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for conservation futures. This additional levy would have required voter approval. The substitute strikes language in the original bill requiring that a portion of the additional levy be earmarked solely for acquiring real property to preserve salmon habitat, and replaces it with language that encourages counties to use conservation futures as a tool for salmon recovery.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For (Proposed Substitute): Rapidly growing populations create an extra demand for this land. Parks are important for quality of life. Clark County has a very successful program that has been used for easements and for the total purchase of property. This money is successfully used to leverage other funds. Clark County and Vancouver use a combined parks program for efficiency. The county commissioners are responsible and accountable for taking the vote to approve the levy. The Endangered Species Act has put additional pressures on areas with growing populations, and conservation futures can be targeted for acquiring critical habitat.

Testimony Against (Proposed Substitute): None.

Testified: Representative Fromhold, co-prime sponsor; Representative Ogden, co-prime sponsor; Sharon Wylie, Clark County; Bill Dygert; Vern Veysey, Association of Realtors; and Mark Brown, city of Vancouver.