
Local Government Committee

HB 1140

Brief Description: Allowing counties to increase funding for properties acquired through conservation futures.

Sponsors: Representatives McIntire, Dunshee, Cooper, Moeller, Wood, Lantz and Chase.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the existing levy for county conservation futures from 6.25 cents to 11 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.
- Allows funds collected from this levy to be used for maintaining and operating property acquired with the funds.
- Imposes limits on the use of levy funds for maintaining and operating park and recreational facilities.

Hearing Date: 1/29/03

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Since 1971, statute has provided a method by which designated entities may acquire and conserve selected open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timberland for public use or enjoyment. Counties, cities, towns, metropolitan park districts, metropolitan municipal corporations, and nonprofit preservation and conservancy corporations meeting statutory requirements may acquire full or partial interests in lands by purchase, gift or other prescribed methods. "Conservation futures" are future development rights in perpetuity of selected lands purchased or otherwise acquired by the eligible public and non-public entities.

Current law provides that counties may levy a tax of up to 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of all taxable property in the county for the purpose of acquiring conservation futures and other related rights and interests in real property. The Department of Revenue has indicated that 13 counties currently use this levy authority. County legislative authorities may also establish a conservation futures fund, which may be used solely for the purpose of acquiring conservation futures and other rights and interests in real property pursuant to

statutory requirements.

Summary of Bill:

The existing county levy rate for conservation futures is increased from 6.25 cents to 11 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. In addition to acquisition, levy funds collected may be used for maintaining and operating property acquired with conservation futures funds. No more than 25 percent of the funds may be used for maintenance and operation of parks and recreational facilities. Conservation futures funds may not be used to supplant existing maintenance and operation funding.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 20, 2003.

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