
Local Government Committee

HB 1411

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

Sponsors: Representatives Fromhold, Wallace, Kenney, Moeller, Boldt and Sullivan.

Brief Summary of Bill

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

Hearing Date: 2/5/03

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 method. "Conservation futures" are future development rights in perpetuity of selected lands.

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 to acquire conservation futures and other rights and interests in real property pursuant to statutory requirements.

Summary of Bill:

The allowable county levy rate for conservation futures is increased from 6.25 cents to 10 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. All rights or interests in real property acquired with conservation futures levy funds must be located within the assessing county. In addition to acquisition, levy funds collected must be used for maintaining and operating property acquired with conservation futures funds. No more than 10 percent of the funds, however, may be used for maintenance and operation of parks and recreational facilities. In addition, conservation futures funds may not be used to supplant existing maintenance and operation funding. Counties are also encouraged to use some conservation futures funds for salmon restoration purposes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.