

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5140

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Parks, Fish & Wildlife, February 18, 2003

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

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

**Sponsors:** Senator Carlson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 2/4/03, 2/18/03 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5140 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Doumit, Jacobsen, Morton, Spanel and Swecker.

**Staff:** Kari Guy (786-7437)

**Background:** The conservation futures tax is a local option property tax assessed at the county level, at a maximum rate of 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Revenue from the tax may be used to purchase or acquire development rights for open space, agricultural, and timber lands. Thirteen counties currently levy the conservation futures tax.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The maximum rate of the conservation futures levy is increased to ten cents. Up to 25 percent of conservation futures revenues may be used for operation and maintenance of property acquired through the conservation futures program.

Counties are encouraged to use conservation futures as a tool for salmon restoration. All conservation futures funds must be spent within the assessing county. Counties with over 500,000 population must develop a process to ensure distribution of conservation futures funds over time.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The percentage of revenue that may be used for operation and maintenance is increased to 25 percent. Counties with over 500,000 population must develop a process to ensure distribution of conservation futures funds over time.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** In fast growing counties, conservation futures funds allow counties to make an investment in future quality of life by purchasing open space land while it is still available. Counties need flexibility to either purchase land if needed, or to use a portion of the funds to maintain the land already purchased.

**Testimony Against:** A tight land supply drives up home prices. Purchasing land for public open space removes it from the tax rolls, and remaining private lands suffer.

**Testified:** Senator Don Carlson, prime sponsor; George Kirkmire, WA Contract Loggers Assn. (con); Sharon Wylie, Clark County (pro); Mark Brown, City of Vancouver (pro); Doug Levy, Cities of Everett, Kent, Federal Way (concern); Dahra Latham, WASAC (pro); Trent Matson, BIAW (pro/con); Brit Kramer and Dawn Vyvyan, Washington Recreation & Park Assn. (pro); Vern Veysey, WA Assn. of Realtors (pro); Mike Ryherd, City of Bremerton and Kennewick (pro/con).