

2SHB 1797 - S COMM AMD

By Committee on Government Operations & Elections

1 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the
2 following:

3 "NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that working
4 forests, farmlands, and open rural zoned lands in the central Puget
5 Sound region are rapidly being converted to other uses. More than
6 eighteen thousand acres of forests and farms in King, Pierce,
7 Snohomish, and Kittitas counties are developed each year, a trend that
8 threatens the state's farm and forestry economies. The legislature
9 further finds that if conversion rates are not controlled, the four
10 hundred thousand acres of rural and agricultural zoned lands in King,
11 Pierce, and Snohomish counties will be fractionated in the next twenty
12 years, and will likely be developed by the end of the twenty-first
13 century.

14 (2) The legislature also finds that this pattern of growth leads to
15 a number of unfavorable conditions, including: (a) The removal of
16 large areas from economically beneficial agricultural and forestry
17 uses; (b) the loss of an important and diversified industry sector and
18 associated employment; (c) the wasteful use of scarce public funds for
19 roads, infrastructure, and fire and safety services; (d) reductions in
20 carbon sequestration benefits from forestry uses; (e) inefficient water
21 withdrawals; and (f) the generation of polluted storm water from
22 impervious surfaces.

23 (3) The legislature intends to provide for an examination of the
24 environmental, economic, and social consequences of current and
25 expected patterns of growth in rural and resource lands, and to secure
26 a common understanding of associated factors. The legislature intends
27 for this examination to result in a widely accepted strategy for
28 identifying how best to maintain the character of rural and resource
29 lands in ways that: (a) Support the goals of the growth management act
30 and the Puget Sound regional council's vision 2040, goals and

1 objectives that direct growth into existing cities and towns; (b)
2 respect landowner rights, values, and concerns; (c) assist in
3 maintaining forest and farmlands and their associated employment; and
4 (d) support Puget Sound restoration activities.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to the availability of funds in
6 the account established by section 3 of this act for this specific
7 purpose, the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, in partnership with the
8 Puget Sound regional council, must conduct an examination of trends
9 affecting, and policies guiding, the maintenance of rural and resource
10 lands in Washington. The examination must commence by July 1st of the
11 year in which funds are made available.

12 (2) In fulfilling the requirements of this section, the center
13 must: (a) Work and consult with willing participants including, but
14 not limited to, stakeholders representing agricultural, environmental,
15 forestry, development, realty, tribal, and local government interests;
16 and (b) involve and apprise legislators and legislative staff of its
17 efforts.

18 (3) The center must conduct fact-finding and stakeholder
19 discussions with participants identified in subsection (2) of this
20 section. These discussions must identify stakeholder concerns,
21 barriers, opportunities, and desired principles for maintaining rural
22 character and conserving resource lands. The fact-finding must
23 identify existing regulatory, management, and scientific information
24 related to rates of growth in rural and resource lands, and associated
25 policies guiding development in these lands. The center must issue two
26 reports of its fact-finding efforts and stakeholder discussions to the
27 governor and the appropriate committees of the house of representatives
28 and the senate: One by December 1st of the year in which funds for the
29 examination become available; and one by the following July 1st.

30 (4) The center must facilitate discussions between the stakeholders
31 identified in subsection (2) of this section for the purposes of
32 identifying options and recommendations for addressing expected growth
33 in a manner that maintains rural character and conserves forest, farm,
34 and natural areas.

35 (5) The center must work to achieve agreement among participating
36 stakeholders and to develop a coalition that can be used to support

1 agreed upon changes or new approaches to: (a) Maintaining the
2 character of rural lands; and (b) conserving agricultural and forest
3 lands of long-term significance.

4 (6) The center must issue a final report of findings and
5 legislative recommendations to the governor and the appropriate
6 committees of the house of representatives and the senate by September
7 1st of the year following the year in which funds for the examination
8 become available.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 43.79 RCW
10 to read as follows:

11 (1) The rural and resource lands study account is created in the
12 custody of the state treasurer. All receipts from gifts, grants, and
13 endowments from public or private sources, in trust or otherwise, shall
14 be deposited into the account. Moneys from the state general fund may
15 not be deposited into the account. Expenditures from the account may
16 be used only for an examination that complies with the requirements of
17 section 2 of this act. Only the director of the department of
18 community, trade, and economic development or the director's designee
19 may authorize expenditures from the account. The account is subject to
20 allotment procedures under chapter 43.88 RCW, but no appropriation is
21 required for expenditures.

22 (2) The legislature intends for the rural and resource lands study
23 account established in this section to be populated exclusively with
24 nongeneral fund moneys."

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25 On page 1, line 1 of the title, after "study;" strike the remainder
26 of the title and insert "adding a new section to chapter 43.79 RCW; and
27 creating new sections."

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