



Williamson Act Guidelines

- 2020 Board of Supervisors Workshop



History of Williamson Act

- California Land Conservation Act of 1965. Program to help conserve ag land.
- Allows counties to restrict specific parcels of land to agriculture, in exchange for lower property tax assessments.
- Land is valued by the capitalization of the income of the land rent received by the owner or by typical rents received for similar land in similar use.
- Open Space Subvention Act of 1971 provided local govt.'s with partial replacement of lost property tax revenues.
- Subvention payments ended in 2009
- SB 527



Application Process

- Applicant files application with Planning Dept.
- Planning routes complete application to interested agencies for comment
- Within 60 days Planning Dept receives comments and holds public hearing with the Agricultural Advisory Commission (AAC).
- Upon conclusion of the public hearing, the AAC shall recommend to the BOS that the application be granted or denied
- BOS hold public hearing on the matter and enter into contract through resolution, if desired.



Williamson Act in Nevada County

- 24 contracts / 80 parcels / 6,565 acres (4%)
- Guidelines last revised in 1994
- Nevada County Agricultural Advisory Commission recommended to revise the guidelines to reflect current times.

New Categories:

- Low Intensity (LI)= livestock
- High Intensity (HI)= (row crops, orchards, vineyards, etc.)

Current vs Proposed

Proposed Guidelines will only impact new/future contracts

Current

- AE, AG, FR zoned parcels
- Min. Acreage Req. = parcel size required in the specific district
- Capital Outlay \$15,000
- \$3,000 Gross Annual Revenue

Proposed

- AE, AG, RA, FR zoned parcels
- Min. Acreage:
 - LI- 80 contiguous ac. (livestock)
 - HI- 20 contiguous ac. (row crops)
- Capital Outlay- \$25,000
- Gross Annual Revenue
 - LI- \$10,000
 - HI- \$20,000



Other Recommendations

- Allow Christmas trees as an Agricultural Use
- Additional language for better compliance/monitoring/reporting



SB 527- Williamson Act

- Provides that Industrial Hemp, cultivated in accordance with specified law, is an agricultural commodity. (qualifying crop)
 - Provides that commercial cultivation of cannabis pursuant to Medicinal and Adult-Use Cannabis Regulations and Safety Act may constitute a compatible use on contracted lands.
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- Hemp/Cannabis will be addressed during future revisions.



Next Steps

- Direction from Board of Supervisors
- Bring revised guidelines to BOS for approval in 2020 (summer)