



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 06/17/2010

A MOTION requesting the department of natural resources and parks to study the potential of creating a local conservation authority as a tool for preserving open space including working landscapes.

WHEREAS, the people of King County have embraced, as a central regional value, the opportunity for personal connection with the region's unique outdoor resources, open spaces, parks and working lands, through the availability of access to these resources, and

WHEREAS, the region's people also place strong emphasis on the availability of recreational opportunities and facilities that enhance physical and spiritual health, including both active and passive recreation, and

WHEREAS, the people of King County greatly value the special educational and interpretive benefits that parks and open spaces provide through creating habitat for fish and wildlife, and

WHEREAS, the people of the region have benefited greatly through access to locally produced, healthy food, as the result of regional initiatives directed toward the preservation of farmlands and the area's rich base of fertile soils, and

WHEREAS, the retention of working forests and working farms in proximity to urban communities can benefit both the communities and the working landscapes, as well as adding to the diversity and resilience of the regional economy, and

WHEREAS, urban communities with nearby working resource lands are benefited by the presence of local wood and agricultural resources, which can be provided to local markets more quickly following harvest,

and with lesser transportation costs and lesser greenhouse gas outputs, and

WHEREAS, working resource lands also serve as "separator" landscapes, which provide functional undeveloped spaces between urban communities, helping to create distinct geographic urban identities, as well as contributing to the quality of the region's waters and to flood control and carbon sequestration needs, and

WHEREAS, local farm owners and working forest owners can benefit by the presence of major markets for their products and by support for the economic foundations of resource-based communities, as well as by the awareness of regulatory and permitting entities of the important local values represented by these resource-based communities, and

WHEREAS, King County's growth management planning and the regional growth management strategy, VISION 2040, recognize the importance of conserving rural landscapes and encouraging growth within urban areas, and

WHEREAS, the ethic of resource sustainability is a chief cultural value of the people of this region and a fundamental reason to seek preservation of working lands and open space resources both for today and for generations to come, and

WHEREAS, a number of new working lands and open space conservation tools have emerged which have the potential to support the retention of these open space lands, and

WHEREAS, one of these potential tools is local conservation authorities, which would act like public development authorities responsible for acquiring working lands and open space utilizing available revenue tools, and

WHEREAS, while creation of such authorities is authorized by state law, this is a concept that is new to the region, and could benefit by close examination of the potential to contribute to acquisition and management of working lands and open space, and

WHEREAS, the Cascade Land Conservancy has provided leadership in identifying and providing focus on appropriate legal and revenue mechanisms that can support the preservation of working lands and open

space, including the local conservation authority concept, and

WHEREAS, the county department of natural resources and parks is the county's natural and open space lands management agency, and currently manages programs that involve the acquisition, management or conservation of open space, working forests and farmlands, development rights or similar services intended to conserve the county's natural and working land base, and has developed expertise in such fields;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The department of natural resources and parks is requested to study, in cooperation with the Cascade Land Conservancy, the potential for the creation of a local conservation authority as a tool for retaining working lands and open space lands.

B. Among the elements of the study should be:

1. The statutory framework for the creation of a local conservation authority;
2. The potential for a local conservation authority to contribute to conservation of working lands and open space lands;
3. The potential for a local conservation authority to contribute to the implementation of desirable urban development; and
4. The potential for utilizing this tool in combination with other programs intended to support the retention of open space and working lands, such as the transfer of development rights program, K.C.C. chapter 21A.37.

C. By March 1, 2011, the department of natural resources and parks is requested to file a report summarizing the results in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, for distribution to all councilmembers.