



Agenda Date: 10/18/2005
Agenda Placement: 3A

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Britt Ferguson for Nancy Watt - County Executive Officer
County Executive Office
REPORT BY: Mary Jean McLaughlin, PIO/Committees & Commissions , 253-4111
SUBJECT: Williamson Act Recognition

RECOMMENDATION

Recognition of Napa County's administration of the Williamson Act by the State Department of Conservation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognition of Napa County's administration of the Williamson Act by the State Department of Conservation.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The California Legislature passed the Williamson Act in 1965 to preserve agricultural and open space lands by discouraging premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses. The Act creates an arrangement whereby private landowners contract with counties and cities to voluntarily restrict land to agricultural and open space uses.

The Act has five goals:

1. To preserve farmland for a secure food supply for the state, nation and future generations;
2. To maintain agriculture's contribution to local and state economic health;
3. To provide a tax incentive to farmers and ranchers who restrict their land to long term contracts;
4. To promote orderly city growth and to discourage leapfrog development and the premature loss of farmland; and,
5. To preserve open space for its scenic, social, aesthetic and wildlife values.

As of the 2004-05 fiscal year, Napa County had 69,430 acres of land enrolled in the Williamson Act, including more than 18,000 acres of prime farmland. The State Department of Conservation has never had any problems with Napa County's enforcement of the Act. There have been no incompatible uses on contracted land, nor any illegal subdivisions. For these reasons officials from the State Department of Conservation wish to recognize Napa County for its administration of the Williamson Act and thus, the protection of agricultural land.

Williamson Act compliance in Napa County involves a coordinated effort on the part of staff in the Assessor's Office, the Conservation, Development, and Planning Department, and County Counsel's Office.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

None

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Britt Ferguson