



## KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

### Signature Report

November 17, 2015

#### Motion 14458

**Proposed No. 2015-0446.3**

**Sponsors Phillips and Dembowski**

1           A MOTION declaring that it is county policy to protect and  
2           conserve land and water resources that will enhance our  
3           quality of life, strengthen our region's economy, enhance  
4           biodiversity, provide recreational opportunities and  
5           promote sustainable farming and locally grown food and  
6           forestry and directing the executive to develop and transmit  
7           a work plan for implementing a program to protect and  
8           conserve these high value resources.

9           WHEREAS, King County is one of the fastest growing counties in the nation, and  
10          the county's population is projected to increase by at least thirty percent by 2040, and

11          WHEREAS, protecting trail corridors, ecological lands, forests, farmland, rivers  
12          and streams, rural character and historic resources located on farmland, enhances  
13          biodiversity, protects our water and air quality and human health, provides fresh local  
14          food for our growing population and helps the county reduce greenhouse gases, and

15          WHEREAS, conservation enhances the region's quality of life and contributes to  
16          a vibrant economy, and

17          WHEREAS, as one example of the economic benefits of resource conservation, in  
18          April 2014, the King County council adopted Motion 14118, affirming King County's  
19          support for the Skykomish Valley Economic Development, Recreation, and Natural

20 Resource Conservation Initiative and recognizing the shared vision of the town of  
21 Skykomish and the Stevens Pass Greenway to enhance economic development, increase  
22 recreation opportunities and conserve the natural resources in the Skykomish valley, and

23 WHEREAS, protecting high conservation value lands, including forests and  
24 farmlands, promotes numerous determinants of equity, including health and human  
25 services, food systems, parks and natural resources and community economic  
26 development, that comprise the county's equity and social justice initiative, and

27 WHEREAS, King County has long been a leader in environmental protection and  
28 conservation, making our region one of the most livable areas in the country and a  
29 sought-after place to live, work and do business, and

30 WHEREAS, in 1968, King County voters approved the Forward Thrust initiative,  
31 which provided funding to preserve four thousand acres of park land as well as fifty-three  
32 miles of waterfront and riparian corridors, and

33 WHEREAS, in 1982, the King County council approved the Conservation Futures  
34 Tax, which has successfully preserved more than one hundred thousand acres of valuable  
35 resource lands and farmlands, and

36 WHEREAS, in 1989, King County voters approved the Open Space bond  
37 measure, which provided funding for the preservation of high-value open space land, and

38 WHEREAS, in 2003, 2007 and 2013, King County voters approved tax levies to  
39 support parks, trails and open space, providing funding to acquire and develop trail  
40 corridors, as well as to preserve valuable open space, and

41 WHEREAS, in July 2009, the King County council adopted Ordinance 16600,  
42 which placed a charter amendment called the Open Space Protection Amendment on the  
43 November 2009 general election ballot, and

44 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Open Space Protection Amendment was to  
45 provide enhanced protection for high conservation value properties either owned by the  
46 county or on which the county held a conservation easement, and

47 WHEREAS, in July 2009, the King County council adopted Ordinance 16601  
48 identifying approximately one hundred fifty thousand acres of county-owned high  
49 conservation value properties that would receive additional protection under the Open  
50 Space Protection Amendment, and

51 WHEREAS, in November 2009, the voters of King County overwhelmingly  
52 approved the Open Space Protection Amendment, and

53 WHEREAS, in December 2012, the King County council passed Motion 13777,  
54 which adopted the King County Strategic Climate Action Plan to guide county operations  
55 and inform decision making for King County to reduce greenhouse gas emissions,  
56 develop performance targets to reduce energy consumption and prepare for climate  
57 change, and

58 WHEREAS, the King County council is in the process of reviewing the 2015  
59 update to the Strategic Climate Action Plan, and

60 WHEREAS, there is a unique opportunity for this generation to build on the  
61 county's strong history of support for resource conservation and protect the last remaining  
62 unprotected farmland, forest land and ecological lands in King County, and

63 WHEREAS, our region's ecological, agricultural, forest and other open space  
64 lands are irreplaceable and, if lost, will be lost forever, and

65 WHEREAS, King County has identified many high conservation value properties  
66 that are at risk, and

67 WHEREAS, the priority conservation areas include ecological lands, forests, farm  
68 land, trail corridors and rivers and streams, and

69 WHEREAS, over time, the opportunities to protect these lands will diminish and  
70 the costs will increase, and

71 WHEREAS, the acquisitions will affirm King County's commitment to remain  
72 one of the greenest metropolitan regions in the world, and

73 WHEREAS, bold, visionary leadership coupled with swift action is needed to  
74 ensure that we continue to protect and enhance our region's quality of life in the face of  
75 dramatic growth;

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

77 A. It is the policy of the county to ensure that King County remains one of the  
78 greenest metropolitan areas in the world by protecting and conserving land and water  
79 resources that will enhance our quality of life, strengthen our region's economy, enhance  
80 biodiversity, provide recreational opportunities and promote sustainable forestry and  
81 farming and locally grown food.

82 B. The executive is requested to develop and transmit to the council a work plan  
83 for implementing a preservation and conservation program to identify, protect and  
84 conserve water and land resources, including farmland and forest lands, ecological lands,  
85 river and stream corridors, trail corridors and historic resources on farmlands, consistent

86 with the purposes of this motion. The work plan should be developed through a  
87 collaborative regional effort that should engage stakeholders, cities, tribes, nonprofit  
88 groups and the public. The work plan should include information about the percentage of  
89 land within the county that is currently designated to be within each of the following:  
90 agricultural production districts; forest production districts; and the farmland preservation  
91 program. The work plan should include criteria for prioritizing high conservation value  
92 resources for protection, a budget estimate to preserve and maintain the identified  
93 properties, recommended funding strategies, a proposal for outreach and education and a  
94 timeline for implementation, as well as the legislation necessary to implement the  
95 program.

96 C. The executive should transmit the work plan for implementation of the  
97 preservation and conservation program by March 30, 2016, in the form of a paper  
98 original and an electronic copy with the clerk of the council, who shall retain the original  
99 and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff,

100 the policy staff director and the lead staff for the transportation, economy and  
101 environment committee, or its successor.

102


Motion 14458 was introduced on 10/26/2015 and passed as amended by the  
Metropolitan King County Council on 11/16/2015, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Lambert,  
Mr. Dunn, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Dembowski and Mr. Upthegrove

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Ms. Hague

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Larry Phillips, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments: None