

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE
PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County government recognizes agriculture and forestry as major contributors to the local economy and a high quality of life for Whatcom County citizens; and

WHEREAS, The Growth Management Act and the County Comprehensive Plan support the retention of agricultural and forestry lands of long term commercial significance and encourage the use of innovative techniques to do so; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance #92-002 enacted a property tax levy known as the Conservation Futures Tax as authorized by RCW 84.34.230 to provide a funding source to assist in acquiring "open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timber land, and a significant Conservation Futures fund balance is available for additional farm land protection efforts"; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance #2002-054 adopted Whatcom County Code Title 3.25A that authorized the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program that offers voluntary farm agreements that include the purchase of agricultural conservation easements on farmable land within Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance #2002-054 and WCC 3.25A established a Purchase of Development Rights Oversight Committee to provide review and assistance to the PDR Program Administrator; and

WHEREAS, The Whatcom County Council adopted the PDR Guidelines Document through Resolution #2002-040 which includes specific direction for program administration and conservation easement acquisitions; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance #2018-065 amended Whatcom County Code 3.25A to direct the PDR Program to also offer voluntary agreements to purchase forestry and ecological conservations easements on working forestlands and important ecosystem areas within Whatcom County; and

WHEREAS, The PDR Program messaging was evaluated in 2019 and the Purchase of Development Rights Oversight Committee recommended changing the program's name to the Whatcom County Conservation Easement Program, and

WHEREAS, The Purchase of Development Rights Oversight Committee has updated the program guidelines so as to better identify properties with high conservation value, and

WHEREAS, The Purchase of Development Rights Oversight Committee voted unanimously on April 23, 2021 to recommend approval of the proposed program name change, updated guidelines, and updates to Whatcom County Code 3.25A.

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that
Whatcom County Code 3.25A is hereby amended as outlined in Exhibit A to this ordinance.

BE IT ALSO ORDAINED by the Whatcom County Council that the PDR Program
Guidelines are also amended as outlined in Exhibit B to this ordinance.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2021.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Approved by email/C Quinn/B Snijder

Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

() Approved () Denied

Date Signed: _____