



California
**Department of
Conservation**
Division of Land
Resource Protection

Williamson Act

Land Conservation Act of 1965

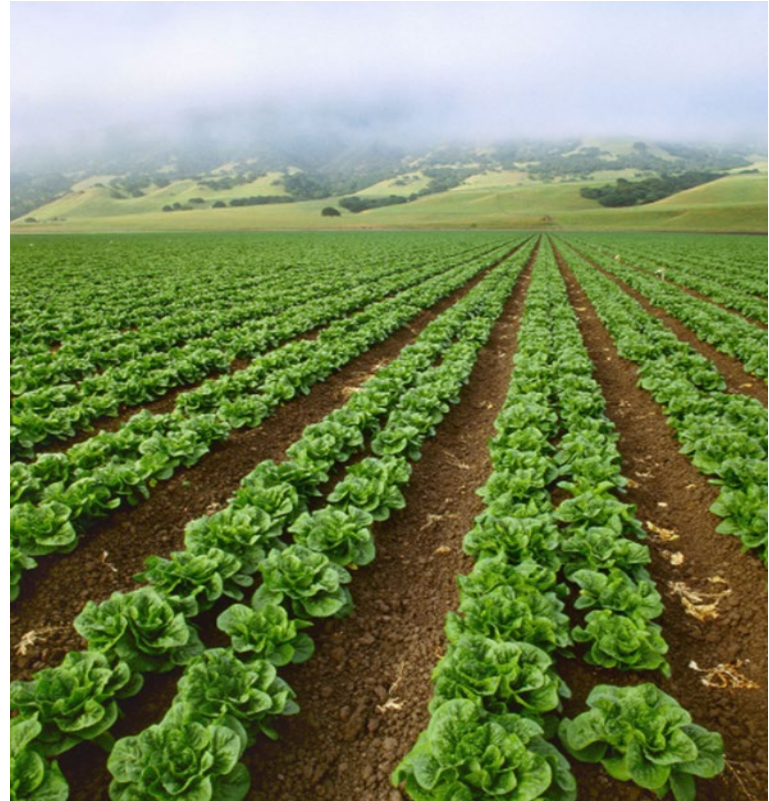
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Land Conservation Act of 1965 “Williamson Act”



- Voluntary program/contracts
- Restricts land usage
- 10-20 year contracts
- Contract renew annually
- Contract runs with the land





Intent of the Williamson Act

- Preservation of ag land
- Conservation of open space
- Discourage conversion of ag land to urban uses





DOC Role



- Provide technical assistance and advice (GC § 51206)
- Detailed review of WA processes
- Data/records retention, biennial WA enrollment reports
- CEQA / WA review and comment (CEQA appendix G)



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What's in it for the Landowner?

- Taxed on generated income vs. potential market value
- ~ 20-70% property tax reduction
- Tax savings can be reinvested





What's in it for the Community?



- Ensures locally produced food and fiber
- Creates stability for support industries
- Provides buffers (planning tool)
- Mitigation

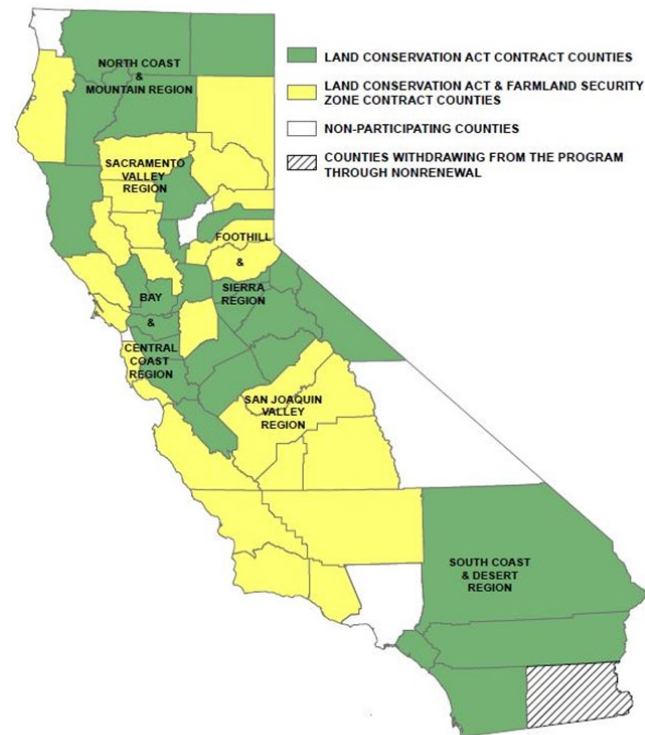


Williamson Act Today



- 52/58 counties participate
- 2004 enrollment ~16.6 million acres
- 2021 enrollment ~10 million acres

- Imperial County: only county to exit the program
- 2016 Los Angeles County: WA talks
- 2017 Yolo County: new contracts





Trends and Challenges

- Loss of subvention funding
- Decline in enrollment reporting
- Trend analysis is difficult
- 2021 reported enrollment ~10 million acres
- 2021 estimated enrollment ~15 million acres





Trends and Challenges Compatible Use

- Use must be compatible
- Solar
- Agritourism



Many California growers offer the public "agritourism" opportunities as a way of improving their farm's visibility and profitability. Above, visitors enjoy a gourmet "Dinner in the Barn" at the Romano Family's Sierra Valley Farm in Plumas County.



Trends and Challenges Compatible Use





Trends and Challenges Compatible Use



- No compatibility findings = Cancellation
- Size, scale, scope



Trends and Challenges Compatible Use

- Agritourism ≠ Compatible use
- Agritourism definition
- Roadside fruit stand
- Tasting Rooms
- Wedding / Event Centers
- Bed and Breakfast
- Where to draw the line





Trends and Challenges Compatible Use

- Farm Tours
- Farm Stays
- Farm / Event Center
- Where to draw the line
- Size, scale, scope





Conclusion



- Program continues to be offered
- Williamson Act continues to preserve agricultural and open space land



THANK YOU

Questions?

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History and Purpose of CEQA



California statute passed in 1970, in response to the first Federally passed environmental protection statute the National Environmental Policy Act

Purpose:

- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment
- Encourage public participation
- Foster informed public decision making
- Ensure transparency in governmental decision-making process

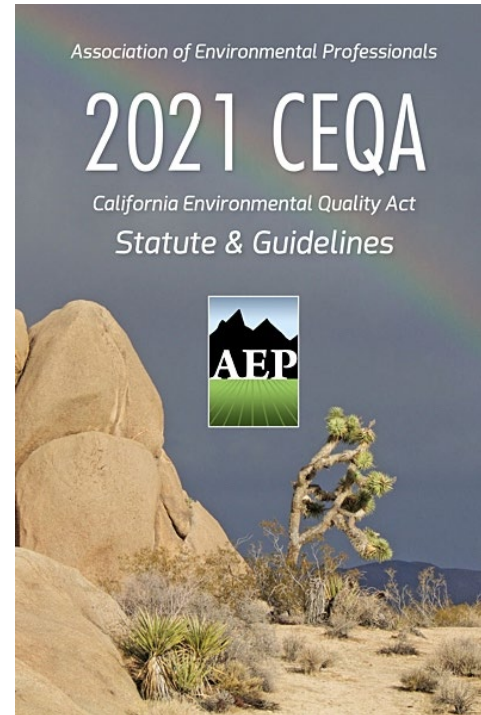




DLRP's Role



- Commenting agency per California Public Resources Code Section 614(a)&(b)
- Review environmental documents related to the Department's areas of responsibility and expertise
- CEQA (Appendix G II. Agricultural Resources)
- FMMP mapping data
- WA enrollment data
- LESA model





Division thresholds for comment

- Williamson Act contracted land
- State/Department funded easements
- Prime Farmland > 10 acres
- Statewide or Unique Farmland > 40 acres





Possible Review Documents



CEQA related:

- Early Consultation
- Public Scoping Hearing
- Initial Study
- Notice of Exemption
- Notice of Preparation
- Negative Declaration
- Mitigated Negative Declaration
- DEIR/EIR/SEIR/FEIR

Williamson Act related:

- Ag Preserve Boundary Adjustment
- Solar Use Permit
- Cancellation
- Public Acquisition
- Annexation
- New Contracts
- Contract Non-renewal

County and City related:

- Lot Line Adjustments
- Subdivision Applications
- Tentative Subdivision Maps
- Rezone/Prezone Applications
- Coastal Zone Permit Applications
- General Plan Updates/Amendments
- Ordinance Amendments
- Site Plan Application
- Minor Use Permit
- Conditional Use Permit
- Special Use Permit
- Excavation Application
- Commission Hearings
- LAFCo Hearings

Year	Projects reviewed	Comment letters written
2019	1200	40
2020	1116	30
2021	1103	47



Typical DOC Comments

- Compliance with WA Government Code
- Compliance with City/County GP
- Compliance with Easement guidelines
- Mitigation for impact to farmland
- 1:1 Ag easements
- In-lieu of fees





THANK YOU

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