

DEPARTMENT: Administration

BY: Richard Inman
PHONE: 966-3222

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Adopt a Resolution opposing the Governor's 2003-04 State Budget proposal to permanently eliminate the Open Space Subvention Program. The Open Space Subvention Program, commonly known as the Williamson Act, was enacted in 1965. This voluntary program is administered by local governments and involves a 20-year annually renewing contract with individual landowners that restrict the land to agricultural or open space use. Landowners who enroll their land in contracts receive preferential taxation based on the actual use value of the land for agricultural purposes. The State provides subvention payments to participating counties as partial compensation for foregone revenues resulting from reduced property taxes paid on contracted land. Currently Mariposa receives approximately \$200,000 in Williamson Act subvention payments, which helps to fund the General Fund.

If the Governor is successful with his proposal, Mariposa County will lose the \$200,000 it currently receives in subvention payments. The Board will ultimately have to decide whether or not to renew the Williamson Act contracts, which will have a direct impact on the property taxes being paid the affected landowners, but most importantly will have long range effects on future land development issues. Currently approximately 23-percent of Mariposa County is in Williamson Act contracts.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Board has adopted resolutions in the past that support its stand on critical issues.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Do not adopt the Resolution. The Governor and the State Legislature may not be aware of how the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors feel about his proposal.

Financial Impact? () Yes (X) No	Current FY Cost: \$	Annual Recurring Cost: \$
Budgeted In Current FY? () Yes () No () Partially Funded		
Amount in Budget: \$ _____		List Attachments, number pages consecutively
Additional Funding Needed: \$ _____		Resolution
Source:		_____
Internal Transfer _____		_____
Unanticipated Revenue _____ 4/5's vote		_____
Transfer Between Funds _____ 4/5's vote		_____
Contingency _____ 4/5's vote		_____
() General () Other		_____

CLERK'S USE ONLY:

Res. No.: 0383 Ord. No. _____
Vote - Ayes: 5 Noes: _____
Absent: _____

hwy
 Approved
 Minute Order Attached () No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

Date: _____
Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board
County of Mariposa, State of California
By: _____
Deputy

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

Requested Action Recommended
 No Opinion
Comments:

CAO: *R. Inman*



COUNTY of MARIPOSA

P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222


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DISTRICT IV
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MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: RICH INMAN, County Administrative Officer
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board 
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO PERMANENTLY ELIMINATE THE OPEN SPACE SUBVENTION PROGRAM
Resolution No. 03-83

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

ADOPTED THIS Order on March 25, 2003

ACTION AND VOTE:

Adopt a Resolution Opposing the Governor's 2003-04 State Budget Proposal to Permanently Eliminate the Open Space Subvention Program (Williamson Act) (County Administrative Officer)

BOARD ACTION: Discussion was held with Rich Inman, County Administrative Officer. Supervisor Bibby stated she has family that participates in this program, as well as a vested remainder interest, and she was advised that this is not a conflict with this matter. Rich advised that he could draft a cover letter with stronger language to transmit the resolution. (M)Parker, (S)Bibby, Res. 03-83 was adopted/Ayes: Unanimous.

cc: File

MARIPOSA COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 03-83

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE GOVERNOR'S 2003-04 STATE BUDGET
PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY ELIMINATE THE
OPEN SPACE SUBVENTION PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, popularly known as the Williamson Act, is a voluntary program which provides lower property taxes to agriculture landowners in exchange for their contractual commitments with participating cities or counties to keep their land in agricultural or open space uses for at least 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the Williamson Act currently protects over 16.3 million acres of agricultural land, much of it having scenic open space and wildlife value, and over half of the state's prime farmland in 52 counties is protected by the Act; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 the Act was amended to provide for the establishment of the Farmland Security Zones, commonly referred to as the Super Williamson Act, which allows landowners to receive an additional tax reduction if they keep the property in the conservation program for at least 20 years; and

WHEREAS, the 1971 Open Space Subvention Act provides a formula for allocating payments to local governments based on acreage enrolled in the program to help replace the foregone property tax revenue to participating local governments; and

WHEREAS, this financial support from the state has provided a tangible incentive for local governments to stay in the program and initiate more contracts; and

WHEREAS, in 1993 the Legislature and then-Governor Wilson augmented the open space subventions as a means to help rural counties deal with the creation of the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund; and

WHEREAS, eliminating the open space subvention payments will remove the incentive for counties to participate in the program, potentially leading some counties to non-renew Williamson Act contracts due to the lack of financial resources to support the continuation of property tax incentives for landowners; and

WHEREAS, without financial incentive for farmers to participate in this important land conservation program, other more lucrative land uses may be considered, thus threatening the overall viability of California's agricultural economy; and

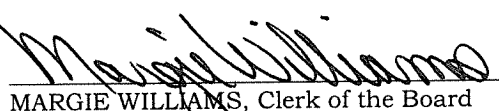
WHEREAS, the integrity of the Williamson Act as a planning tool used to support general plan and zoning objectives, prevent leapfrog development, and to promote orderly growth will be threatened.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of Mariposa County opposes the proposed elimination of the Open Space Act Subventions Program and urges the Governor and Members of the State Legislature to restore the subvention funding to the 2003-04 State Budget, thus preventing the potential decimation of the state's premier farmland protection program.

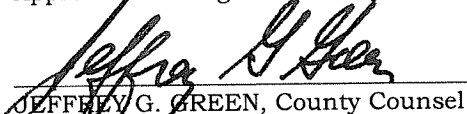
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of Mariposa County this 25th day of March 2003, by unanimous vote.


BOB PICKARD, Chairman

Attest:


MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board

Approved, as to legal sufficiency:


JEFFREY G. GREEN, County Counsel