



RESOLUTION NO. 2013-05

**A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE SPF FAIR AND EQUAL CONSIDERATION
POLICY TO FRAME AND GUIDE THE ORGANIZATION'S LAND PROTECTION
EFFORTS**

WHEREAS, Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland (SPF) is a non-profit corporation organized and in compliance with IRC Section 501(c)(3) and IRC Section 170(h)(3). Article V(A) of the SPF Bylaws provides authority for the SPF Board to adopt this Resolution; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the SPF Fair and Equal Consideration Policy is to elevate the importance of protecting our State's farm and ranch lands along with the protection of our State's other critical areas and environmental resources and to help frame and guide SPF's land protection efforts; and

WHEREAS, the SPF Land Protection Committee has developed and reviewed the proposed Fair and Equal Consideration Policy for Board review and recommends its approval.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the SPF Board of Directors approves the SPF Fair and Equal Consideration Policy to help frame and guide the organization's land protection efforts.

Steve Sakuma, Board President
Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

As Secretary of the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland, I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was approved at a **Regular** Meeting of the Board of Directors held on **Wednesday, June 12, 2013**, at which time a quorum was present and the resolution passed by a vote of 9 FOR, 0 AGAINST, and 0 ABSTENTIONS.

John Roozen, Secretary
Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland

Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland Fair & Equal Consideration Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the SPF *Fair and Equal Consideration Policy* is to elevate the importance of protecting our State's farm and ranch lands along with the protection of our State's other critical areas and environmental resources. The Growth Management Act requires the designation and protection of our agricultural resources lands in addition to other critical areas.¹ However, to date, the bulk of the land use and environmental policy in Washington State has focused primarily on critical areas protection which has resulted in our agricultural lands becoming the consumptive land base for all other land uses; critical areas protection, habitat restoration, public open spaces and urban expansion. Since the passage of the Growth Management Act (GMA) from 2001 to 2006 approximately 4,300 acres farm land has been converted to impervious surfaces in Puget Sound.² Until *Fair and Equal Consideration* exists for our agricultural resource lands, farm and ranch lands will continue to be converted to non-agricultural uses and the state's ability to produce food and fiber products will be irrevocably impaired.

The principal policy recommendation is to elevate the protection of farm and ranch lands to the same level as the State's other critical lands and resources, to establish a statewide farm and ranch lands protection and preservation goal, and to advocate specifically to establish statewide policies that will elevate the value of our state's remaining agricultural land base.

This policy framework supports the foundation that the collective values and functions of such farm and ranch lands, as they exist today, must at a minimum, be maintained. While local governments have the discretion to adopt development regulations under the GMA that may result in localized impacts upon, or even the loss of some farmland areas, such flexibility must be wielded sparingly and carefully for good cause, and in no case result in a net loss of today's values, functions and agricultural productivity of such designated agricultural lands of long term commercial significance.

¹ RCW 36.70A.060 and RCW 360.70A.070(5)(c)(v).

² NMFS, Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan – 2011 Implementation Status Assessment Final Report, 2006, page 6.

Policy

- SPF shall work collaboratively with decision makers to fully implement Washington State's new legislative directive, codified under **RCW 43.21C.011**, to

“ . . . identify and take into account the adverse effects of . . . proposed actions on the preservation and conservation of agricultural lands; and to consider alternative actions, as appropriate, that could lessen such adverse effects; and to assure that such actions appropriately mitigate for unavoidable impacts to agricultural resources. . . ”
- SPF shall work collaboratively with decision makers to create a framework for the protection of our remaining agricultural land base, as defined by acreage and soils, in order to enhance and increase the quantity of the agricultural natural resource land base where feasible.
- SPF shall work collaboratively with decision makers to focus on the future, not the present or the past, to prescribe actions to effectively support the agricultural industry, protect the remaining agricultural resource lands and to actively promote the enhancement and preservation of these lands for the future of farming.
- SPF shall work collaboratively with decision makers to anticipate the needs and problems for farmland protection, preservation and enhancement on the basis agricultural values, developments in agricultural science and production technology and threats to the agricultural land base from conversions to non-agricultural uses.

Goals

- By 2032 there shall be 20,000 acres³ of farmland within the Skagit Delta permanently protected from non-agricultural use by the placement of agricultural conservation easements held by Skagit County's Farmland Legacy Program.
- By 2020 there shall be a functioning TDR market place in Skagit County which allows for smart community growth and economic development while protecting our important and valuable agricultural resources lands.
- By 2020 there shall be an active and functioning ecosystem market place that is providing *less-than-fee simple* opportunities for wildlife viewing, hunting and habitat and water quality improvements.

³ 2013 Memorandum of Understanding by and between The Nature Conservancy, national Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Skagit County, Skagitians to Preserve Farmland, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Western Washington Agricultural Association and the Dike and Drainage Partnership.