# Staff Report

Meeting Date: December 13, 2022

To: Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

From: Hailey Lang, Planning Director

Subject: Amendment to the County’s Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts

## Background

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, is a program created by the State to help conserve agricultural land and open space areas. The Williamson Act enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purposes of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open spaces uses. In return, landowners receive lower property tax assessments based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value.

## Discussion

At the August 2, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board directed staff to revise the County’s Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts (‘Guidelines’) to better meet the intent of Williamson Act. During this time, staff has worked with the Agricultural Commissioner and other stakeholders to improve the guidelines. At the November 1, 2022 Board of Supervisors meeting, staff had presented the revised Guidelines to the Board for discussion and potential action.

 A summary of the edits below:

* Language cleanup of the document, for better readability for the public.
* Provided better definitions of agricultural uses.
* Provided better definitions of Compatible Uses, such as selling off-site wood.
* Added language to clarify how residential uses are involved in contracts.
* Defined the processes and roles the departments take in enforcing and monitoring contracts.
* Added language to clearly define the non-renewal process, which is identified in Government Code.
* Recognized exemptions for certain forestry activities.
* That any personal or financial information shall be confidential to the fullest extent provided by law (including the California Constitution and the Information Practices Act of 1977)

The edits summarized above are with the intention of better explaining to property owners with contracted Williamson Act lands their responsibility of maintaining the program but also providing information on the County’s role in administering and enforcing the program.

## Recommended Motions

I move to adopt the Resolution hereby taking the following actions:

1. Determine the amendments to the *Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts* becategorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15307 and 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines; and
2. The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors do hereby adopt the amendments to Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts attached as Exhibit A of this Resolution attached and incorporated herein.

## Attachments

1. Draft Resolution, a Resolution of the County of Siskiyou, State of California, Amending the Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts
	1. Exhibit A within Draft Resolution: Proposed Amendments to the Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts