# Staff Report

Meeting Date: January 2, 2024

To: Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

From: Bernadette Cizin, Associate Planner

Subject: Proposed Hinton/Embree Williamson Act Rescission with Re-entry (APA-23-08) and CEQA Determination

## Background and Discussion

On May 24, 2023, the County received an application for a Williamson Act Contract amendment to rescind approximately 305 acres, 75 acres owned by the Hinton’s and 230 by the Embree’s, from the existing Williamson Act contract and create two separate contracts, one for each ownership, with the primary Agricultural Use of livestock grazing. The property is currently under one Williamson Act contract which has only these two property owners.

This project does not propose to remove or add property to the existing agricultural preserves.

**Agricultural Preserve Administrator Review**

Staff prepared a detailed report (Exhibit B) for review and recommendation by the Agricultural Preserve Administrator. Based on the report, the Administrator found the applicant’s request is consistent with the County Rules for the Establishment and Administration of Agricultural Preserves and Williamson Act Contracts and recommends the Board rescind and reissue the contract as proposed.

## Environmental Review

Staff is proposing that the proposed project be considered categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15317, *Open Space Easements or Contracts.* A Categorical Exemption implies that the project will not result in any significant adverse environmental effects. CEQA Guidelines Section 15317 specifically exempts the making and renewing of open space contracts under the Williamson Act, which is applicable to the subject action.

The Board of Supervisors must consider the proposed CEQA exemption together with any comments received during the public review process. Further, the exemption can only be approved if the Board finds, based on the whole record before it, that there is not substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment. Accordingly, a finding to this effect has been incorporated into both draft resolutions prepared for the Board’s consideration.



Figure 1: Subject Property

## Comments

Agency Comments

***Siskiyou County Assessor – August 7, 2023***

The Assessor’s office has provided estimated tax assessment values for the three parcels included in this project (Exhibit C).

Public Comments

Notice of the project was published and posted as required prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting and no public comment was received as of the preparation of this staff report.

## Recommended Action

Should the Board of Supervisors concur with staff’s analysis, staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors find that the proposed modifications to the Williamson Act contract is exempt from CEQA and approve said modifications.

A draft motion to this effect is provided below.

## Recommended Motions

I move to take the following actions:

1. Determine the project exempt from CEQA in accordance with Section 15317, Open Space Easements or Contracts; and
2. Adopt the attached resolution approving the rescission and reentry of the applicable Williamson Act contract.

Exhibits to the Staff Report

1. Draft Resolution Approving the Rescission of the subject property from the existing contract and Reentry into new Williamson Act Contracts
2. Exhibit A within Draft Resolution: Williamson Act Contract Hinton – Draft
3. Exhibit B within Draft Resolution: Williamson Act Contract Embree - Draft
4. Agricultural Preserve Administrator Staff Report with Recommendation
5. Comments