



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

Williamson Act

Land Conservation Act of 1965

Williamson Act Contract Nonrenewal Process

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Williamson Act / CEQA

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<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa>



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
- Local rules and regulations (GC 51231)



Seven Ways to Remove Williamson Act Contracts



- **Nonrenewal** – Term out to expiration date
- **Cancellation** – Owner petition and approval process
- **Easement Exchange** – temporary contract exchanged for permanent easement.
- **Solar-Use Easement** – local program acceptance and approval process
- **Public Acquisition** – Eminent Domain
- **Material Breach** – County investigation into structural violation.
- **Annexation** – Requires a protest letter for

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Williamson Act Contract Removal



The expiration or termination of a Williamson Act contract may occur for a number of reasons, which follow:

Nonrenewal

A landowner or the city/county initiates a Notice of Nonrenewal for the entire contract or a portion of the contracted land, which begins a nine year count down to the expiration of the contract for standard contracts, or a nineteen year countdown for Farmland Security Zone contracts. The land is subject to all the requirements of the contract until it expires. Refer to [Government Code Section 51245](#) on the California

https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa/Pages/removing_contracts.aspx



Williamson Act Nonrenewal Process

Government Code Section 51245



Landowner Initiated

1. Landowner contacts county/city for appropriate form or notice procedure.
2. Landowner submits nonrenewal notice to county/city at least 90 days before annual renewal date. *NOTE: Partial nonrenewals may require Board/Council approval.*
3. Clerk of the board/council records the notice with the county recorder within 20 days of receipt.
4. Countdown to expiration begins.
IMPORTANT: Landowner must comply with the contract until it expires. (9 or 19 years depending on the length of the contract)

County/City Initiated

1. County/city sends notice of nonrenewal to landowner at least 60 days prior to the renewal date.
2. Landowner may file a written protest prior to the renewal date.
3. County/city may withdrawal nonrenewal any time prior to the annual renewal date.
4. Clerk of the board/council records notices with the county recorder within 20 days of receipt.
5. Countdown to expiration begins. Landowner must comply with the contract until it expires at full maturity date.



Nonrenewal Contract Terms

Terms of the contract are enforceable for the full length of the contract and taxes increase over time in years until the contract expires.

Length of contract	Expires After Annual Renewal Date
9 year	8 years
10 year	9 years
19 year	18 years
20 year	19 years



Williamson Act Nonrenewal Statutes



TODAY'S NONRENEWAL Government Code:

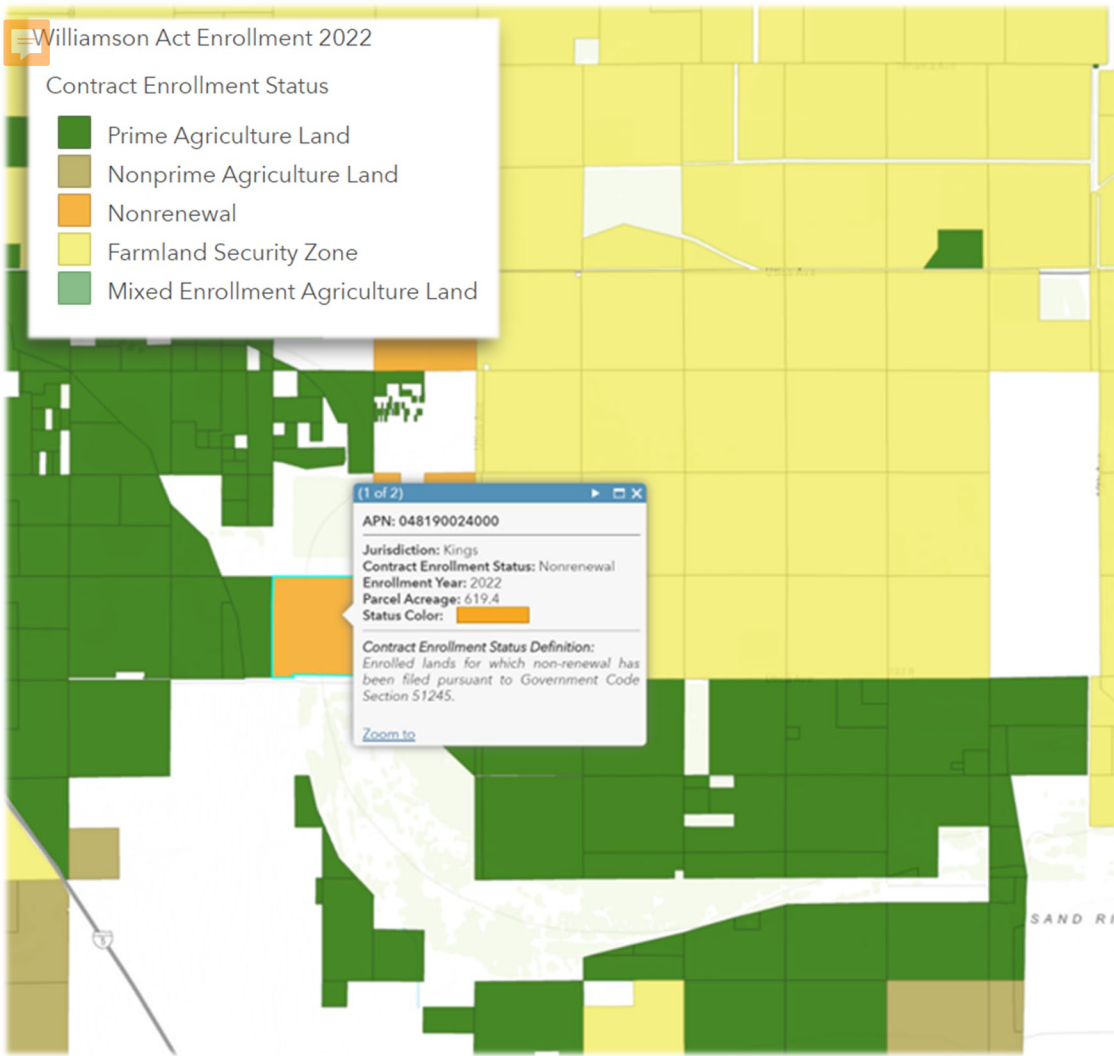
- [Section 51243](#) – allows landowners to submit nonrenewal notices for a portion of the contract independent of the other owner when the land has been divided.
- [Section 51244](#) – Annual renewal process if no notice of Nonrenewal submitted. Option to reduce length of contracts to increase property tax revenue also reduces the nonrenewal period.
- [Section 51245](#) – landowner/county nonrenewal process.
- [Section 51246](#): Contract remains in effect until it expires.

SB 574 CHANGES To Nonrenewal Government Code:

- **Section 51243** – NO CHANGE
- **Section 51244** – NO CHANGE
- **Section 51245**: Removed the requirement for the county to submit a copy of the notice of nonrenewal to the Department of Conservation.
- **Section 51246**: (Notice of Expiration) • Removed the requirement to notify the Department of the expiration of a Williamson Act contract.
- ~~**Section 51249**: (Filing of Sample Contract)~~ REPEALED removed the requirement to provide the Department with a sample copy of each form of contract.

Contract Enrollment Status

- Prime Agriculture Land
- Nonprime Agriculture Land
- Nonrenewal
- Farmland Security Zone
- Mixed Enrollment Agriculture Land



Williamson Act GIS Data collected annually from counties

[Government Code Section 51237.5](#)

On or before January 30 of each year, each city or county in which any agricultural preserve is located shall provide the Department with geographical information system (GIS) data files of all agricultural preserves and Williamson Act contracted land in existence at the end of the preceding year.

<https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/agriculture/>



THANK YOU

Questions?

Williamson Act/CEQA Team

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