



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

Williamson Act, Ag Preserves, & FSZ's

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Williamson Act & CEQA Program

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Team WA/CEQA!





Land Conservation Act of 1965 “Williamson Act”

- Restricts land usage
- Voluntary program/contracts
- Local rules and regulations
- 10-20-year contracts
- Contract renew annually
- Contract runs with the land



Intent of the Williamson Act

- Preservation of ag land
- Conservation of open space
- Discourage conversion of ag land to urban uses

What is DOC Role?

- Provide technical assistance and advice ([Government Code § 51206](#))
- Detailed review of WA processes
- Data/records retention, [annual WA enrollment reporting](#)
- CEQA / WA review and commenting ([CEQA appendix G](#))



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What's in it for the Landowner?

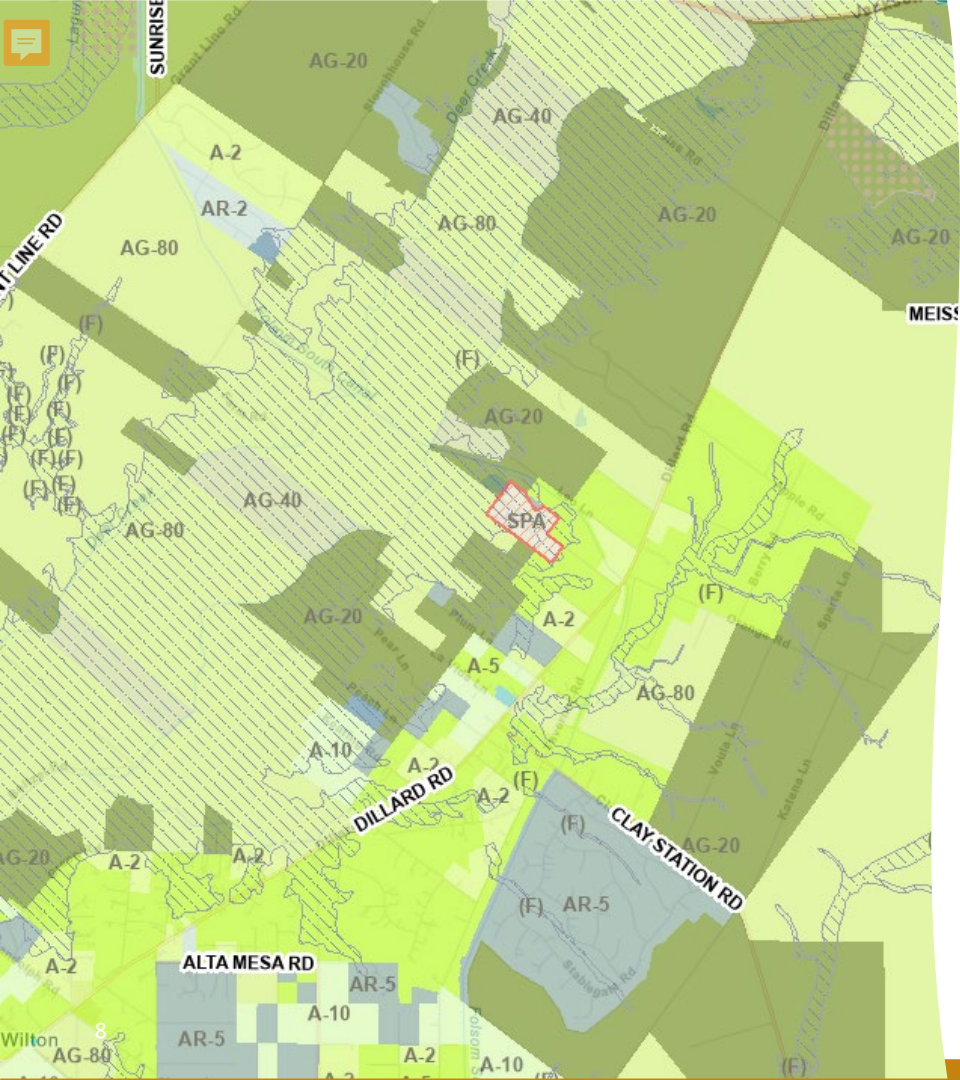
- Taxed on generated income vs. potential market value
- [Revenue & Taxation Code § 421-431](#)
- ~ 20-70% property tax reduction
- Tax savings can be reinvested



What's in it for the Community?

- Ensures locally produced food and fiber
- Creates stability for support industries
- Provides buffers (planning tool)
- Ag/Open Space preservation & Urban Growth



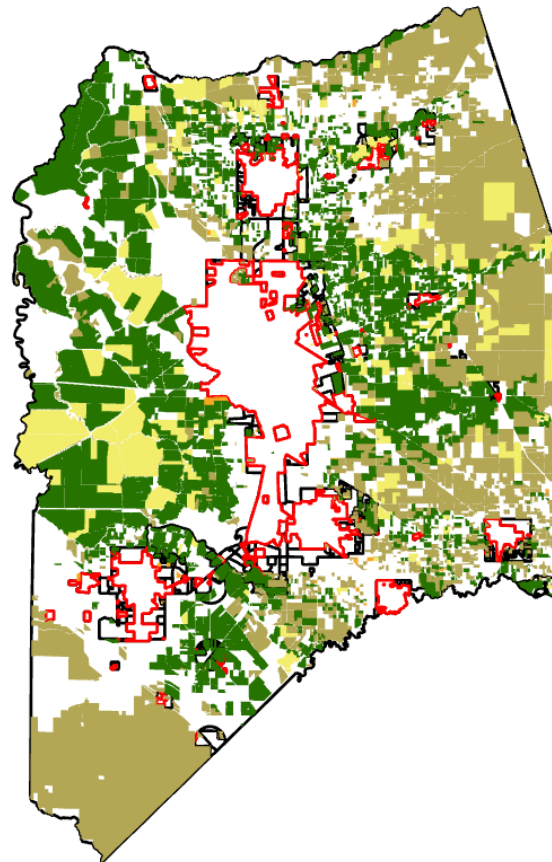
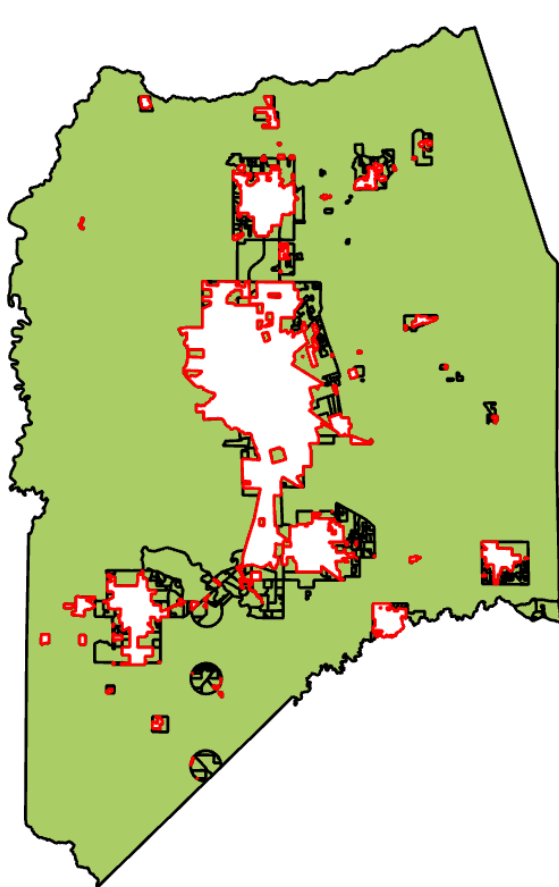


Agricultural Preserves

- [Government Code § 51230](#)
- Typically 100-acre minimum
- Two or more parcels may be combined to meet acreage minimums
- Often tied to local zoning
- Not all parcels within an Ag Preserve are required to go under WA contract
- Public acquisition notification



Agricultural Preserves: San Joaquin County





Farmland Security Zone Contracts

- FSZ or “Super” Williamson Act
- 18–20-year term
- Must be located on FMMP, Prime, Statewide, Unique, or Locally Important farmland ([Government Code § 51296.8](#))
- Increased property tax reduction 65% of normal WA contract on same land ([Revenue & Taxation Code § 423.4](#))
- Increased cancellation penalty 25% ([Government Code § 51297](#))



Williamson Act Enrollment

- 51/58 counties participate
- Peak enrollment 2004 ~16.6 million acres
- 2023 enrollment ~15.6 million acres
- ~14.6 million acres of standard WA contracts
- ~1 million acres of FSZ contracts





THANK YOU

Questions?

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