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2
3 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
4 Snohomish County, Washington
5

6 ORDINANCE NO. 25-054
7

8 APPROVING A SYSTEM OF RATES AND CHARGES PROPOSED BY THE
9 SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT PURSUANT TO RCW 89.08.405 FOR
10 NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION PURPOSES ON ALL NON-EXEMPT REAL
11 PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND
12 SNOHOMISH COUNTY FOR A TEN-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING IN 2026
13

14 WHEREAS, the Snohomish Conservation District (hereinafter "District") was
15 formed in 1941 to undertake a variety of activities relating to the management and
16 conservation of natural resources; and
17

18 WHEREAS, the boundaries of the District include most of Snohomish County
19 (hereinafter "County") and Camano Island, which is part of Island County; and
20

21 WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 89.08.405(1), the county legislative authority may
22 in its discretion consider a proposal by a conservation district for a system of rates and
23 charges as an alternative to, but not in addition to, a special assessment provided by
24 RCW 89.08.400; and
25

26 WHEREAS, RCW 89.08.405(3)(a) states that the proposed system of rates and
27 charges may include an annual per acre amount, an annual per parcel amount, or an
28 annual per parcel amount plus an annual per acre amount and the maximum annual per
29 acre amount not exceeding ten cents per acre; and
30

31 WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 89.08.405(4), the consideration, development,
32 adoption, and implementation of a system of rates and charges shall follow the same
33 public notice and hearing process and be subject to the same procedure and authority
34 under RCW 89.08.400(2); and
35

36 WHEREAS, pursuant to RCW 89.08.400(2), special assessments to finance the
37 activities of a conservation district may be proposed by the district and imposed by the
38 county legislative authority in which the district is located for a period or periods each
39 not to exceed ten years; and
40

41 WHEREAS, RCW 89.08.400(2) directs the supervisors of a conservation district
42 proposing a special assessment to hold a public hearing on the proposed system of
43 assessments prior to the first day of August in the year prior to the year in which the
44 initial assessment would be collected and file the proposed system of assessments and
45 a proposed budget for the succeeding year with the county legislative authority; and
46

1 WHEREAS, on November 15, 2022, Snohomish County Council adopted
2 Ordinance 22-039, establishing a system of rates and charges for the District for a ten-
3 year period; and
4

5 WHEREAS, in 2025, the Washington State Legislature amended RCW
6 89.08.405 (3), increasing the per parcel maximum to \$25; and
7

8 WHEREAS, on July 31, 2025, after holding a public hearing on July 10, 2025,
9 and a public meeting on July 22, 2025, the District filed with the Snohomish County
10 council a proposal for a new system of rates and charges to be imposed by the council
11 beginning in 2026 and for the next ten years to ensure service continuation; and
12

13 WHEREAS, this proposal, if adopted, would supersede and replace the current
14 system of rates and charges that were adopted by Ordinance 22-039; and
15

16 WHEREAS, on _____, 2025, the council held a public hearing on the
17 District's proposed system of rates and charges pursuant to RCW 89.08.405; and
18

19 WHEREAS, the council intends by this ordinance to replace the system of rates
20 and charges adopted by Ordinance 22-039 and accept the system of rates and charges
21 as proposed by the District on July 31, 2025, for natural resource conservation
22 purposes on all non-exempt real property located within the District and county for a
23 ten-year period beginning in 2026, as provided herein;
24

25 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:
26

27 Section 1. The Snohomish county council makes the following findings and
28 conclusions:
29

30 A. The foregoing recitals are incorporated as if fully set forth herein.
31

32 B. The District is a governmental subdivision of the State of Washington
33 authorized by chapter 89.08 RCW to conserve natural resources.
34

35 C. As acknowledged by the legislature in RCW 89.08.010(4), there is a pressing
36 need for the conservation of natural resources in all areas of the state, whether urban,
37 suburban, or rural, and the benefits of resource practices, programs, and projects
38 carried out by the state conservation commission and local conservation districts should
39 be available to all such areas; and
40

41 D. District activities and programs to be funded by the proposed system of rates
42 and charges include promotion of sustainable agriculture and farmland preservation,
43 including supporting efforts to reduce the conversion of farmland to other uses and
44 educating urban, suburban, and rural residents (including youth) on the importance of
45 local agriculture and the value of farmland preservation; farm planning and water quality
46 improvements, including providing farm planning and technical assistance in best

1 management practice (BMP) implementation and enhancing financial support; natural
2 resource management, including providing permit and other assistance to enhance
3 critical resource management areas and participating in salmon recovery and other
4 natural resource conservation planning efforts; county-wide information and education,
5 including providing youth education programs, assisting the county and governmental
6 entities, educating landowners regarding wildland fire prevention and risk through the
7 "Firewise" program, and promoting stewardship, backyard conservation, and
8 sustainable living; urban conservation, including providing technical services and
9 financial assistance to urban and suburban landowners and supporting city natural
10 resource conservation efforts; and

11
12 E. All lands within the District subject to the proposed system receive a special
13 benefit from the activities and programs of the District that are financed by the rates and
14 charges; and

15
16 F. The public interest will be served by the imposition of rates and charges as
17 proposed by the District and imposed by this ordinance; and

18
19 G. The system of rates and charges imposed on any land by this ordinance will
20 not exceed the special benefits that the land receives or will receive from the activities
21 and programs of the District; and

22
23 H. The system of rates and charges imposed by this ordinance will not apply to
24 areas within the District that are not located within the county, including Camano Island
25 for which special assessments may be imposed by the legislative authority of Island
26 County pursuant to WAC 135-100-040; and

27
28 I. RCW 89.08.405(6) authorizes the county treasurer to deduct an amount from
29 the collected rates and charges to cover costs incurred by the county assessor and
30 county treasurer in spreading and collecting the rates and charges, as established by
31 the Snohomish county council, but not to exceed the actual costs of such work.

32
33 Section 2. Pursuant to RCW 89.08.405, subject to the limits for certain forest
34 lands provided therein and the exemptions for non-assessed property and duration
35 stated below, the county council hereby accepts the system of rates and charges
36 proposed by the District and imposes annual rates and charges on all land within
37 Snohomish County located within the boundaries of the District for the purpose of
38 financing the programs and activities of the District. This system of rates and charges
39 will supersede and replace the system of rates and charges adopted by Ordinance 22-
40 039. The system of rates and charges are imposed in the following manner: beginning
41 January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, at a rate of \$15.00 per parcel plus \$0.10
42 per acre; beginning January 1, 2029, through December 31, 2031, at a rate of \$20.00
43 per parcel plus \$0.10 per acre; and beginning January 1, 2032, through December 31,
44 2035, at a rate of \$25.00 per parcel plus \$0.10 per acre.

1 Section 3. The following are classified as non-assessed property and are
2 exempt from the system of rates and charges imposed by this ordinance:
3

4 A. Parcels not taxed by the county, including publicly-owned and Native
5 American lands;
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7 B. Parcels zoned Forestry (F) under chapter 30.21 SCC;
8

9 C. Parcels located within the county but outside the boundaries of the District; and
10

11 D. Personal property.
12

13 Section 4. The system of rates and charges imposed by this ordinance shall be
14 collected in 2026 and each year thereafter for a total of ten years.
15

16 Section 5. Pursuant to RCW 89.08.405(6) the system of rates and charges
17 imposed by this ordinance shall constitute liens against the parcels assessed and shall
18 be subject to the same conditions as tax liens, collected by the treasurer in the same
19 manner as delinquent real property taxes, and subject to the same interest rate and
20 penalty as for delinquent property taxes.
21

22 Section 6. Pursuant to the Interlocal Cooperation Act, chapter 39.34 RCW, the
23 county and the District may enter into agreements providing for county review and
24 approval of District work plans and budgets to coordinate programs for managing and
25 conserving natural resources funded by the system of rates and charges imposed by
26 this ordinance.
27

28
29 *[The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.]*
30

PASSED this ____ day of _____ 2025.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

Council Chair

ATTEST:

Deputy Clerk of the Council

() APPROVED
() EMERGENCY
() VETOED

DATE: _____

County Executive

ATTEST:

Approved as to form only:

/s/Rebecca Guadamud 9/15/2025
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney