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3 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL  
4 Snohomish County, Washington

5  
6 ORDINANCE NO. 25-  
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  
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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  
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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  
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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.

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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;  
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9           C. Parcels located within the county but outside the boundaries of the District; and  
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11           D. Personal property.

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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.

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29                                   *[The remainder of this page is intentionally left blank.]*  
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PASSED this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2025.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL  
Snohomish County, Washington

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council Chair

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the Council

- APPROVED
- EMERGENCY
- VETOED

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Executive

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to form only:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney