APPROVED: 11/10/26
EFFECTIVE:

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

ORDINANCE NO. 26-059

APPROVING A SYSTEM OF RATES AND CHARGES PROPOSED BY THE SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT PURSUANT TO RCW 89.08.405 FOR NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION PURPOSES ON ALL NON-EXEMPT REAL PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN SNOHOMISH CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND SNOHOMISH COUNTY FOR AN EIGHT-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING IN 2027

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, on July 31, 2026, after holding a public meeting on June 23, 2026, the District filed with the Snohomish County council a proposal for a new system of rates and charges to be imposed by the council beginning in 2027 and increasing each year through 2029, and thereafter to continue for five years to ensure service continuation; and

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

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2026, the council held a public hearing on the District's proposed system of rates and charges pursuant to RCW 89.08.405; and

WHEREAS, the council intends by this ordinance to replace the system of rates and charges adopted by Ordinance 22-039 and accept the system of rates and charges as proposed by the District on July 31, 2026, for natural resource conservation purposes on all non-exempt real property located within the District and county for an eight-year period beginning in 2027, as provided herein;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:

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

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

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

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

D. District activities and programs to be funded by the proposed system of rates and charges include promotion of sustainable agriculture and farmland preservation, including supporting efforts to reduce the conversion of farmland to other uses and educating urban, suburban, and rural residents (including youth) on the importance of

local agriculture and the value of farmland preservation; farm planning and water quality improvements, including providing farm planning and technical assistance in best management practice (BMP) implementation and enhancing financial support; natural resource management, including providing permit and other assistance to enhance critical resource management areas and participating in salmon recovery and other natural resource conservation planning efforts; county-wide information and education, including providing youth education programs, assisting the county and governmental entities, educating landowners regarding wildland fire prevention and risk through the "Firewise" program, and promoting stewardship, backyard conservation, and sustainable living; urban conservation, including providing technical services and financial assistance to urban and suburban landowners and supporting city natural resource conservation efforts; and

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

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

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

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

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

Section 2. Pursuant to RCW 89.08.405, subject to the limits for certain forest lands provided therein and the exemptions for non-assessed property and duration stated below, the county council hereby accepts the system of rates and charges proposed by the District and imposes annual rates and charges on all land within Snohomish County located within the boundaries of the District for the purpose of financing the programs and activities of the District. This system of rates and charges will supersede and replace the system of rates and charges adopted by Ordinance 22-039. The system of rates and charges are imposed in the following manner: beginning January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027, at a rate or $15.00 per parcel plus $0.10 per acre; beginning January 1, 2028, through December 31, 2028, at a rate of $20.00 per parcel plus $0.10 per acre; and beginning January 1, 2029, and for a six-year period thereafter, at a rate of $25.00 per parcel plus $0.10 per acre.

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

A. Parcels not taxed by the county, including publicly-owned and Native American lands;

B. Parcels zoned Forestry (F) under chapter 30.21 SCC;

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

D. Personal property.

Section 4. The system of rates and charges imposed by this ordinance shall be collected in 2027 and each year thereafter for a total of eight years.

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

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

PASSED this 10th day of November 2026.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

Council Chair

ATTEST:

Clerk of the Council

( ) APPROVED
( ) EMERGENCY
( ) VETOED

DATE: _____

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County Executive

ATTEST:

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Approved as to form only:

Marsh, George Digitally signed by Marsh, George Date: 2026.09.03 10:25:24 -07'00'

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Deputy Prosecuting Attorney