

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1773**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Patterson**

**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Choi, Gallagher, Mathis, and  
Smith) *Smith, Flora, Fong, Lackey, and Villapudua***

**(Coauthors: Senators Grove, Jones, and Nielsen) *Nielsen, Bates, Dahle,  
and Ochoa Bogh***

February 3, 2022

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An act to amend Section 16148 of the Government Code, relating to agricultural land, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1773, as introduced, Patterson. Williamson Act: subvention payments: appropriation.

The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, authorizes a city or county to enter into contracts with owners of land devoted to agricultural use, whereby the owners agree to continue using the property for that purpose, and the city or county agrees to value the land accordingly for purposes of property taxation. Existing law sets forth procedures for reimbursing cities and counties for property tax revenues not received as a result of these contracts and continuously appropriates General Fund moneys for that purpose.

This bill, for the 2022–23 fiscal year, would appropriate an additional \$40,000,000 from the General Fund to the Controller to make subvention payments to counties, as provided, in proportion to the losses incurred by those counties by reason of the reduction of assessed property taxes. The bill would make various findings in this regard.

Vote:  $\frac{2}{3}$ . Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) The preservation of our limited supply of agricultural land  
4 helps to protect the state's economic resources, not only for the  
5 maintenance of the agricultural economy of the state but also for  
6 the assurance of adequate, healthful, and nutritious food for future  
7 residents of this state and nation.

8 (b) The discouragement of premature and unnecessary  
9 conversion of agricultural land to urban uses is a matter of public  
10 interest, and benefits to urban residents because it discourages  
11 noncontiguous urban development patterns that increase the cost  
12 of community services and vehicle miles traveled.

13 (c) The preservation of agricultural lands as open space is also  
14 a public benefit, and agricultural production on such lands  
15 constitutes an important physical, social aesthetic, and economic  
16 asset to existing and future residents of the state.

17 (d) The preservation of agricultural land within scenic highway  
18 corridors and wildlife habitat areas is also of great value to the  
19 state because of its scenic beauty and as habitat for wildlife that  
20 contributes to biological diversity.

21 (e) Recent research has found that an acre of urban land emits  
22 70 times as much greenhouse gases as an acre of irrigated cropland.  
23 The Williamson Act (Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 51200)  
24 of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of the Government Code) helps  
25 keep farmland and open space from being converted to urban use.

26 (f) The open-space subvention program (Chapter 3 (commencing  
27 with Section 16140) of Part 1 of Division 4 of Title 2 of the  
28 Government Code) is crucial not only to counties' continued  
29 participation in preserving agricultural land, but also to the state's  
30 continued role in overseeing California's most important land  
31 conservation program.

32 SEC. 2. Section 16148 of the Government Code is amended  
33 to read:

34 16148. ~~Zero dollars (\$0)~~ *Forty million dollars (\$40,000,000)*  
35 is appropriated for the ~~2010-11~~ 2022-23 fiscal year from the  
36 General Fund to the Controller to make subvention payments to  
37 counties pursuant to Section 16140 in proportion to the losses

1 incurred by those counties by reason of the reduction of assessed  
2 property taxes.

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5 **REVISIONS:**

6 **Heading—Line 3.**

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