

(1) For the period beginning May 1, 2007, and (concluding July 1, 2011, counties and cities may not amend or adopt critical area ordinances under RCW 36.70A.060(2) as they specifically apply to agricultural activities. Nothing in this section:

(a) Nullifies critical area ordinances adopted by a county or city prior to May 1, 2007, to comply with RCW 36.70A.060(2);

(b) Limits or otherwise modifies the obligations of a county or city to comply with the requirements of this chapter pertaining to critical areas not associated with agricultural activities; or

(c) Limits the ability of a county or city to adopt or employ voluntary measures or programs to protect or enhance critical areas associated with agricultural activities.

(2) Counties and cities subject to deferral requirements under subsection (1) of this section:

(a) Should implement voluntary programs to enhance public resources and the viability of agriculture. Voluntary programs implemented under this subsection (2)(a) must include measures to evaluate the successes of these programs; and

(b) Must review and, if necessary, revise critical area ordinances as they specifically apply to agricultural activities to comply with the requirements of this chapter by December 1, 2012.

(3) For purposes of this section and RCW 36.70A.5601, "agricultural activities" means agricultural uses and practices currently existing or legally allowed on rural land or agricultural land designated under RCW 36.70A.170 including, but not limited to: Producing, breeding, or increasing agricultural products; rotating and changing agricultural crops; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie fallow in which it is plowed and tilled but left unseeded; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant as a result of adverse agricultural market conditions; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant because the land is enrolled in a local, state, or federal conservation program, or the land is subject to a conservation easement; conducting agricultural operations; maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural equipment; maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural facilities, when the replacement facility is no closer to a critical area than the original facility; and maintaining agricultural lands under production or cultivation.

[2010 c 203 § 1; 2007 c 353 § 2.]

Notes:

**Finding -- Intent -- 2007 c 353:** "(1) The legislature finds that the goal of preserving Washington's agricultural lands is shared by citizens throughout the state. The legislature recognizes that efforts to achieve a balance between the productive use of these resource lands and associated regulatory requirements have proven difficult, but that good faith efforts to seek solutions have yielded successes. The legislature believes that this willingness to find and pursue common ground will enable Washingtonians to enjoy the benefits of a successful agricultural economy and a healthy environment, while also preventing the unnecessary conversion of valuable agricultural lands.

(2) The legislature, therefore, intends this act, the temporary delays it establishes for amending or adopting provisions of certain critical area ordinances, and the duties and requirements it prescribes for the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, to be expressions of progress in resolving, harmonizing, and advancing commonly held environmental protection and agricultural viability goals.

(3) The legislature fully expects the duties and requirements it is prescribing for the Ruckelshaus Center to be successful. If, however, the efforts of the center do not result in agreement on how to best address the conflicts between agricultural activities and certain regulatory requirements as they apply to agricultural activities, the legislature intends, upon the expiration of the delay, to require jurisdictions that have delayed amending or adopting certain regulatory measures to promptly complete all regulatory amendments or adoptions necessary to comply with the growth management act.

(4) The legislature does not intend this act to reduce or otherwise diminish existing critical area ordinances that apply to agricultural activities during the deferral period established in RCW 36.70A.560." [2007 c 353 § 1.]

**Effective date -- 2007 c 353:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 8, 2007]." [2007 c 353 § 5.]

**Expiration date -- 2007 c 353:** "This act expires December 1, 2012." [2010 c 203 § 3; 2007 c 353 § 6.]