

**RCW 36.70A.700 Purpose—Intent—2011 c 360.** (1) The purpose of chapter 360, Laws of 2011 is to establish the voluntary stewardship program as recommended in the report submitted by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to the legislature as required by chapter 353, Laws of 2007 and chapter 203, Laws of 2010.

(2) It is the intent of chapter 360, Laws of 2011 to:

(a) Promote plans to protect and enhance critical areas within the area where agricultural activities are conducted, while maintaining and improving the long-term viability of agriculture in the state of Washington and reducing the conversion of farmland to other uses;

(b) Focus and maximize voluntary incentive programs to encourage good riparian and ecosystem stewardship as an alternative to historic approaches used to protect critical areas;

(c) Rely upon RCW 36.70A.060 for the protection of critical areas for those counties that do not choose to participate in this program;

(d) Leverage existing resources by relying upon existing work and plans in counties and local watersheds, as well as existing state and federal programs to the maximum extent practicable to achieve program goals;

(e) Encourage and foster a spirit of cooperation and partnership among county, tribal, environmental, and agricultural interests to better assure the program success;

(f) Improve compliance with other laws designed to protect water quality and fish habitat; and

(g) Rely upon voluntary stewardship practices as the primary method of protecting critical areas and not require the cessation of agricultural activities. [2011 c 360 § 1.]