SENATE BILL REPORT
SSB 6097

As Passed Senate, February 13, 2026

Title: An act relating to adding federally recognized Indian tribes to the list of entities that may participate in the conservation futures program.

Brief Description: Adding federally recognized Indian tribes to the list of entities that may participate in the conservation futures program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Chapman, Conway, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Kauffman, Liias, Nobles, Riccelli, Stanford, Trudeau and Valdez).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/19/26, 2/02/26 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 2/13/26, 32-16.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Adds federally recognized Indian tribes to the list of entities that may participate in the Conservation Futures Program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6097 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Chapman, Chair; Krishnadasan, Vice Chair; Liias, Saldaña and Shewmake.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Short, Ranking Member; Schoesler and Wagoner.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Signed by Senator Muzzall.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

Background: Counties may levy a property tax of up to $0.0625 per $1,000 of assessed valuation to generate funds to acquire Conservation Futures to preserve open space, timber, and farm and agricultural lands. With Conservation Futures revenues, counties, cities, metropolitan park districts, and certain other local governments and nonprofit organizations may acquire land, easements, or development rights to preserve lands. Property owners whose Conservation Futures are held by another party may continue to use the open space, timber, or farm and agricultural land in accordance with terms in the Conservation Futures agreement.

All rights or interests in real property acquired with Conservation Futures tax revenues must be located within the assessing county. Counties are encouraged to use some Conservation Futures as one tool for salmon preservation. Counties may use up to 25 percent of Conservation Futures tax revenues collected during the previous year for maintenance and operations of parks and recreational land.

Summary of First Substitute Bill: Federally recognized Indian tribes are added as an entity that may participate in the Conservation Futures Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The Conservation Futures program has been successful in preserving agricultural lands and leveraging funds with other partners. For certain projects, tribes partner with local governments or other stakeholders, however, they are unable to access the Conservation Futures program. The program is voluntary for the county, the landowner, and the tribes. By adding tribal members to the program, counties could further reduce long term stewardship costs. The Conservation Futures program may be used to match federal and state project funds. The projects are evaluated by the counties and this is is a long needed change.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Mike Chapman, Prime Sponsor; Joe Sambataro, Tulalip Tribes of Washington; Nathaniel Lewis, Washington Farmland Trust.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.