



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • 805 654-2488 • <http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning>

The California Land Conservation Act (LCA) Program

A state-adopted, voluntary, land conservation program, also known as the "Williamson Act"

Purpose

- ☞ Help preserve the limited and diminishing supply of agricultural land in the county through agricultural LCA contracts;
- ☞ Encourage production of food, fiber, and ornamental crops and commodities for local, regional, state, national and international markets;
- ☞ Discourage premature conversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural land uses;
- ☞ Help sustain and promote the county's commercial agricultural industry and the direct, indirect, and imputed effect on the countywide and state economy;
- ☞ Allow compatible uses within agricultural contracts that do not hinder or compromise the existing or potential agricultural productivity of agricultural land;
- ☞ Help preserve wildlife habitat areas through open space (wildlife habitat) LCA contracts; and
- ☞ Allow compatible uses within open space LCA contracts that do not adversely affect the preservation of wildlife habitat areas.

Ventura County Contracts

In Ventura County, the LCA Program is administered by the Ventura County Planning Division. In 2008, the County had about 1000 LCA (10-year) and FSZA/LCA (20-year) contracts in the unincorporated area, for a total of approximately 128,900 acres under contract.

How The Program Works

At the heart of the LCA Program is a contract between the County and qualifying landowners that restricts contracted land to agricultural uses for either a minimum of 10 years (LCA contract) or maximum of 20 years (Farmland Security Zone Act, "FSZA" contract). In exchange for the land use restriction, the landowner receives preferential property tax treatment.

When the contract has been approved by the Board of Supervisors and recorded, the contract is said to "run with the land" and is binding upon the landowner and successors in interest.

The contract automatically renews annually unless the nonrenewal process is initiated by either party to the contract. Under nonrenewal, the contract term is not renewed annually but "winds down" over the remaining 9 years of the contract term, with taxes gradually rising to the full, unrestricted rate.

Once the contract expires, the land is no longer restricted to agricultural uses. Cancellation of the contract is also available to the landowner in extremely limited circumstances.

To partially compensate for the loss of property taxes from enrollment in LCA contracts, the State typically reimburses participating jurisdictions in a "subvention" payment based upon the amount of acreage and type of land under contract.

General Requirements

To be eligible for a contract, a parcel must be a legal lot of at least 9 acres (if considered prime land as defined by the Land Conservation Act) and must demonstrate an agricultural income of \$500/acre from the property during three of the past five years. A certain percentage of the land, depending on parcel size, must be in crop production.

If the land is to be contracted for grazing, the minimum parcel size is 80 acres, and the landowner must demonstrate that it can sustain a certain number of “animal units,” as defined in the LCA Guidelines.



Information on the Internet

Ventura County LCA Guidelines:

http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/programs/LCA_Guidelines8_06.pdf

California Department of Conservation's LCA (Williamson Act):

www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/lca/index.htm

State statutes for the Land Conservation Act:

http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/lca/lrcc/Pages/governing_statutes.aspx

Additional Information

If you have questions regarding the eligibility of property for an LCA contract, wish to request a contract application, or need other information, contact LCA Program Planner, Andrea Ozdy, at (805) 654-2453 or andrea.ozdy@ventura.org.

For LCA contract property tax information, contact: David Whaley of the Assessor's Office at (805) 477-1510 or dave.whaley@ventura.org.

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LCA Application Deadlines

New LCA or FSZA/LCA Contracts or Nonrenewal of a Portion of a Contract:

➔ **Annually, 1st Friday in June**

Nonrenewal of an Entire Contract:

➔ **Annually, October 1st** (if on Saturday or Sunday, following Monday).

All LCA or FSZA/LCA contracts must be approved by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors and recorded **by December 31st** to be effective for the following calendar year.