

2017 Policy Initiative:

Confidentiality of Landowner Plans and Assessments

This initiative proposes to make voluntary property self-assessment tools and Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP) Stewardship Plans exempt from disclosure.

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

Concerns exist around the public disclosure of property self-assessment tools and VSP Stewardship Plans.

Under current law, **property self-assessment tools** are disclosable:

- The intent of self-assessments is to encourage landowners to evaluate and correct potential resource issues in a non-regulatory, risk-free setting.
- If or when self-assessment results are disclosed in a public records request, landowners may feel at risk of regulation, and few will want to participate.

Under current law, **VSP Stewardship Plans** may be subject to disclosure:

- VSP Stewardship Plans weren't intended to be full-scale farm plans, which are exempt from disclosure.
- Many landowners want to use USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service programs—which require a farm plan—to achieve VSP goals.
- It's unclear how Stewardship Plans will differ from farm plans, causing questions about whether they too should be exempt from disclosure.

Concern about disclosure of plans and assessments impedes landowner participation and progress toward conservation goals.

PROPOSAL UNDER CONSIDERATION

Draft legislation to exempt from disclosure VSP Stewardship Plans and voluntary property self-assessment tools.

WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU AND YOUR STAKEHOLDERS!

The SCC Board of Commissioners would like comments about this initiative from CDs and partners. **Please talk with your local stakeholders about this proposal, and send us your feedback by COB on December 15, 2017 using the form on our website: scc.wa.gov/2017initiatives.**

What property plans and assessments are disclosable under current law?



Farm plans **are exempt** from public disclosure



Property self-assessment tools (e.g. Firewise Risk Assessment) **are disclosable**



VSP Stewardship Plans **may be subject to disclosure**