
Cost of Community Services

*Skagit County
Washington*

by American Farmland Trust



Study findings indicate that farm, forest and open land had a positive fiscal impact on Skagit County in 1997.

Executive Summary

This study demonstrates that protection of agriculture is crucial to the economic well being of Skagit County. Crops produced in the Skagit Valley, including vegetable seeds, berries, potatoes, row crop vegetables, bulbs and flowers, contribute nearly \$200 million to the local economy annually.¹ Skagit's famous tulip festival attracts about one million visitors each spring, generating \$65 million in annual tourism revenues.²

People familiar with the valley know the importance of farming to local families and businesses. Residents understand how the working landscape is ingrained in the rural lifestyle that depends on healthy natural resources. The findings of this study show the economic value of agriculture in Skagit County from another perspective - its fiscal benefit to the county.

Study findings indicate that farm, forest and open land had a positive fiscal impact on Skagit County in 1997. Because of its modest requirement for services, open land created a surplus of revenue for the county. For every dollar of revenue they generated, farm, forest and open land only cost 51 cents. Residential development overall did not pay for itself, requiring \$1.25 in services for every dollar of revenue generated.

1997 SKAGIT COUNTY FINDINGS	Residential Development	Commercial Development	Industrial Development	Farm Forest Open Land
Land use ratio*	\$1.00 : \$1.25	\$1.00 : \$0.34	\$1.00 : \$0.29	\$1.00 : \$0.51

Findings show that farms and forests in Skagit County are more than scenic landscapes – they are a positive economic investment in the community. This information will be useful to the county as intensifying growth pressures require thoughtful land use decisions. Sound planning is necessary to ensure sufficient investment in the health of Skagit County's economy and unique natural resources.

* Cost per dollar of revenue