

2017 Policy Priorities

STEERING COMMITTEE

Joseph Bonelli
University of Connecticut

Bonnie Burr
University of Connecticut

Cris Coffin
Land for Good

Jeff Corduluack
CT NOFA

Gordon Gibson
Connecticut State Grange

John Guszkowski
CME Associates

Eric Hammerling
CT Forest & Park Association

Lisa Holmes
CitySeed

Terry Jones
Jones Family Farms

Kip Kolesinskas
Manchester

Henry Lord
New Haven

Elisabeth Moore
Connecticut Farmland Trust

Lucy Nolan
End Hunger CT!

Amy Paterson
CT Land Conservation Council

Richard Roberts
Halloran & Sage

Jesse Robertson-DuBois
American Farmland Trust

Jim Smith
Cushman Farm

Melissa Spear
Common Ground

Keith Stechshulte
Farm Credit East

Kevin Sullivan
Chestnut Hill Nursery

Henry Talmage
CT Farm Bureau Association

STAFF
Clark Chapin
Director

The Working Lands Alliance policy priorities provide advocacy focal points aimed at protecting CT's farmland and leveraging the value of the Department of Agriculture's limited resources while ensuring a robust and well-funded farmland preservation program.

Priorities Specific to the 2017 Legislative Session

1. Pursue the required second year passage of a Constitutional Amendment that protects the state's conservation, agricultural, and recreation lands from being conveyed without appropriate process and compensation
2. Pursue legislation to prohibit the conversion of prime and statewide important soils on state and municipal property for solar energy
3. Ensure that the 50% diversion of Community Investment Act funds does not get extended into the next 2-year budget (FY18-FY19) and that no more funds are transferred from the CIA Account to the General Fund

Ongoing Priorities

- Protect the integrity of Community Investment Act funding and ensure funds remain dedicated to core programs, per legislative intent
- Maintain existing bond funding and bond authorizations for both the CT Farmland Preservation Program and the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant Program
- Advocate for adequate resources, creative strategies, and robust partnerships to effectively implement the Dept. of Agriculture's farmland protection programs including stewardship of protected farms
- Work with Governor's office and Department of Agriculture to exercise authority granted by legislature to permanently protect state-owned farmland parcels in the Department's custody
- Advocate for funding and staff resources needed for the Department of Agriculture and other state and federal agencies that provide critical programs and support to farmers and farm businesses
- Identify means to expand farmland access and affordability and share information with policymakers about farm succession issues resulting from an aging farmer population and other agricultural viability issues
- Explore tax incentives, beginning farmer loan programs, and other policy tools as a means to expand farmland access and affordability
- Promote and incentivize climate change adaptation strategies including controlled-environment agriculture and state-of-the-art practices and techniques for water, air, and soil management