



A Project of American Farmland Trust

2016 Policy Priorities

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

1. Increase pace of statewide farmland protection efforts and ensure that maximum local, state and federal dollars are spent to preserve CT's farmland
 - 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 Grant Program
 - Advocate for adequate resources, creative strategies, and robust partnerships to effectively implement the Dept. of Agriculture's farmland protection programs and to steward protected farms
 - Work with Department of Agriculture Commissioner and staff to implement recommendations of the Farmland Preservation Advisory Board Best Practices Subcommittee, aimed at accelerating the pace of farmland protection in Connecticut
 - Work with Governor's office and Department of Agriculture to exercise authority granted by legislature to permanently protect farmland parcels in the Department's custody
 - Pursue concept of legislation enabling municipalities to collect up to a 1% conveyance fee on buyers to support acquisition of farmland and open space and to provide funds for stewardship efforts
2. Advocate for funding and staff resources needed for the Department of Agriculture and other state agencies that provide critical programs and support to farmers and farm businesses
3. Pursue a Constitutional Amendment that protects the state's conservation, agricultural, and recreation lands from being conveyed without appropriate process and compensation
4. Identify means to expand farmland access and affordability and educate policymakers about agricultural viability issues
 - Explore tax incentives, beginning farmer loan programs, and other policy tools as a means to expand farmland access and affordability
 - Advocate for adjustments to FarmLink Program and Farmland Restoration Program statutes to expand their impact and improve program delivery.
 - Educate policymakers about key findings from 2012 Census of Agriculture, including farm succession issues resulting from an aging farmer population