



General Assembly

January Session, 2015

Raised Bill No. 346

LCO No. 1136



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE FARMLAND RESTORATION AND
VACANT LANDS PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 22-6c of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

3 (a) The Commissioner of Agriculture may reimburse any farmer for
4 part of the cost of compliance with a comprehensive farm nutrient
5 management plan or a farm resources management plan, provided
6 such plan has been approved by the Commissioner of Energy and
7 Environmental Protection. The Commissioner of Agriculture, in
8 cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, may
9 certify for payment comprehensive farm nutrient management or farm
10 resources management plan practices that have been approved by the
11 Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection pursuant to
12 this section. The total federal and state grant available to a farmer shall
13 not be more than ninety per cent of such cost. In making grants under
14 this subsection, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall give priority to

15 capital improvements made in accordance with a comprehensive farm
16 nutrient management plan or a farm resources plan prepared pursuant
17 to section 22a-354m.

18 (b) The Commissioner of Agriculture may reimburse any farmer for
19 part of the cost [associated with developing] to develop, implement
20 and comply with a farm resources management plan or a farmland
21 restoration plan intended to restore farmland, provided such plan has
22 been approved by the commissioner. [and such] Such reimbursement
23 [does] shall not exceed fifty per cent of the cost of such plan or twenty
24 thousand dollars, whichever is less, except any such reimbursement
25 for such a management or restoration plan on any state-owned land or
26 any municipally owned land with an agricultural lease of five years or
27 longer shall not exceed ninety per cent of the cost of such management
28 or restoration plan or twenty thousand dollars, whichever is less. Such
29 plan may require agricultural restoration purposes, as defined in
30 section 22-6d, as amended by this act.

31 (c) For purposes of this section, "farmland restoration plan" means a
32 conservation plan of the United States Department of Agriculture's
33 Natural Resources Conservation Service, a conservation plan of a soil
34 and water conservation district established pursuant to section 22a-315
35 or a conservation plan approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture.
36 "Farmland restoration plan" includes "agricultural restoration
37 purposes", as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act.

38 Sec. 2. Section 22-6d of the general statutes is repealed and the
39 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

40 As used in section 22-6e: "Commissioner" means the Commissioner
41 of Agriculture; "department" means the Department of Agriculture;
42 "garden" means a piece of land appropriate for the cultivation of herbs,
43 fruits, flowers, or vegetables; "sponsor" means any municipal agency
44 or nonprofit civic service association or organization designated by the
45 commissioner to operate a program pursuant to section 22-6e; "use"

46 means, when applied to gardening, to make use of, without
47 conveyance of title or any other ownership; "vacant public land" means
48 any land owned by the state, or any municipality therein, that is not in
49 use for public purposes; "agricultural restoration purposes" means
50 reclamation of [grown over] grown-over pastures and meadows,
51 installation of fences in restoration areas to keep wildlife out of such
52 areas, manage livestock and to keep livestock out of riparian areas,
53 replanting of vegetation on erosion prone land or along streams,
54 restoration of water runoff patterns, improvement of irrigation
55 efficiency, conducting hedgerow management, including the removal
56 of invasive plants and timber, or renovating farm ponds through farm
57 pond management and any incidental land clearing activities
58 attendant to such reclamation, installation, restoration, replanting,
59 improvement, management or renovating.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2015</i>	22-6c
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2015</i>	22-6d

Statement of Purpose:

To clarify certain authorities of the Commissioner of Agriculture under the department's Farmland Restoration and Vacant Public Lands programs.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]