



General Assembly

**Raised Bill No. 5383**

February Session, 2016

LCO No. 1784

\* \_\_\_\_\_HB05383ENV\_\_\_031416\_\_\_\_\_\*

Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:  
(ENV)

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE FARM VIABILITY MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM AND THE CONNECTICUT FARM LINK PROGRAM.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 22-26j of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 The Department of Agriculture shall establish and administer a  
4 farm viability matching grant program to any agricultural not-for-  
5 profit organization, municipality, group of municipalities, regional  
6 council of governments organized under the provisions of sections 4-  
7 124i to 4-124p, inclusive, or group of municipalities that have  
8 established a regional interlocal agreement pursuant to sections 7-339a  
9 to 7-339l, inclusive, to further agricultural viability. Such grants may be  
10 used for the following purposes: (1) Local capital projects that foster  
11 agricultural viability, including, but not limited to, processing facilities  
12 and farmers' markets; (2) the development and implementation of  
13 agriculturally-friendly land use regulations and local farmland  
14 protection strategies that sustain and promote local agriculture; [and]  
15 (3) the development of new marketing programs and venues through  
16 or in which a majority of products sold are grown in the state; and (4)

17 the development and implementation of programs and services that  
18 promote farm and farmland access and transfer of such farms.

19 Sec. 2. Section 22-26l of the 2016 supplement to the general statutes  
20 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
21 *from passage*):

22 (a) The Department of Agriculture shall establish and administer a  
23 Connecticut Farm Link program to establish a database of farmers and  
24 agricultural land owners who intend to sell, lease or otherwise transfer  
25 their farm operations or agricultural land. The database shall be  
26 maintained by the Department of Agriculture and shall be made  
27 available to the public on the department's web site. Persons interested  
28 in starting an agricultural business or persons interested in expanding  
29 a current agricultural business may notify the department and have  
30 their names, contact information and intentions regarding such  
31 businesses [placed on the web site] entered in such database. The  
32 department shall make reasonable efforts to facilitate contact between  
33 parties with [similar] compatible interests, including, but not limited  
34 to, growing and processing crops as feedstock for biodiesel heating  
35 and transportation fuels. The Department of Agriculture may  
36 collaborate with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, The University of  
37 Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service and the Labor Department  
38 to encourage and assist veterans in starting or expanding an  
39 agricultural business and to provide education and training  
40 opportunities to veterans concerning farming or agricultural  
41 operations.

42 (b) The Department of Agriculture shall post [educational] materials  
43 regarding the Connecticut Farm Link program [on the department's  
44 web site] and farmland access, restoration and transfer on the  
45 department's Internet web site, conduct outreach to landowners and  
46 farmers, perform on-site investigations for lands enrolled in the Farm  
47 Link program, facilitate contact between parties with compatible  
48 interests and provide related educational programming, including, but  
49 not limited to, [information] programs regarding farm transfer and

50 farm succession planning, family farm estate planning, farm transfer  
51 strategies, farm leasing, formation of farm partnerships, growing and  
52 processing crops as feedstock for biodiesel heating and transportation  
53 fuels and information regarding starting a farm business.

54 (c) The department may create partnerships or utilize third-party  
55 entities to implement the provisions of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	22-26j
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	22-26l

**ENV**      *Joint Favorable*