



April 25, 2018

Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Sent via email to Committee Clerk: Robin.Bumpen@cga.ct.gov

Dear Senator Kennedy, Senator Miner, Representative Demicco, Ranking Member Harding, and members of the Environment Committee:

On behalf of Connecticut Farmland Trust, I am writing in **strong support of the proposal to include a technical correction to SB 102** or a similar piece of legislation to enable the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture to undertake “Buy-Protect-Sell” projects in collaboration with land conservation partners as part of the Department’s successful Farmland Preservation Program.

Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is the only statewide, private conservation organization in Connecticut dedicated solely to the preservation of agricultural land and family farms. Since its founding in 2002, CFT has protected 44 family farms, totaling more than 3,400 acres. CFT has assisted the Department of Agriculture in protecting an additional 1,000 acres.

CFT has worked closely with the Department of Agriculture’s Farmland Preservation Program for nine years to preserve prime farmland and is currently collaborating with the Department on more than 15 joint projects. One of these is the Department’s first proposed “Buy-Protect-Sell” (BPS) project. BPS is an important tool for protecting threatened farms—other state Farmland Preservation Programs and agricultural conservation organizations have successfully used it for more than 20 years.

In the Department and CFT’s proposed BPS collaboration, the Department would purchase a historic farm in New Haven County that is highly threatened by development. The owners are under financial pressure to quickly settle an estate and cannot wait to go thru the process of the Department’s Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). The Department would then work with CFT to protect the farm through the FPP process and finally sell the property subject to restrictions to a farmer. BPS is the only way to protect this property, which is one of the last farms in a once active agricultural town.

The inclusion of a technical correction to SB 102 enabling the Department to undertake BPS projects would maximize the Department’s efforts to preserve working farmland. I respectfully urge the Committee to move forward with this proposed amendment. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Moore
Executive Director

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