



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 243

LCO No. 1742



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.

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 Section 22-6c of the general statutes is repealed and the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, 2022*):

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

16 capital improvements made in accordance with a comprehensive farm
17 nutrient management plan, a farmland restoration and climate
18 resiliency plan or a farm resources management plan prepared pursuant
19 to section 22a-354m.

20 (b) The Commissioner of Agriculture may pay or reimburse any
21 farmer for part of the cost to develop, implement and comply with a
22 farm resources management plan or a farmland restoration and climate
23 resiliency plan intended to restore farmland, including for the costs of
24 farm equipment purchases, provided such plan has been approved by
25 the commissioner. [Such reimbursement shall not exceed fifty per cent
26 of the cost of such plan or twenty thousand dollars, whichever is less,
27 except any such reimbursement for such a management or restoration
28 plan on any state-owned land or any municipally owned land with an
29 agricultural lease of five years or longer shall not exceed ninety per cent
30 of the cost of such management or restoration plan or twenty thousand
31 dollars, whichever is less.] The Commissioner of Agriculture may pay
32 or reimburse any nonprofit organization, soil and water conservation
33 district, The University of Connecticut Extension Services or any
34 municipality to: (1) Provide technical assistance, (2) distribute grant
35 funding to producers, (3) coordinate training programs, (4) coordinate
36 projects that pilot or demonstrate conservation practices, (5) create tools
37 that help reduce barriers to accessing assistance for conservation
38 practices on farms, (6) establish equipment sharing programs, or (7)
39 other activities that will increase the number of farmers who are
40 implementing climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices, as
41 defined by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural
42 Resources Conservation Service. Such plan may require agricultural
43 restoration and climate-smart agricultural and forestry plans, practices
44 and purposes, as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act.
45 Priority for funding pursuant to this subsection shall be given to socially
46 disadvantaged producers and new farmers, as defined by the United
47 States Department of Agriculture.

48 (c) For purposes of this section, "farmer" includes, but is not limited
49 to, any lessee or franchise holder of a state or town shellfish bed and

50 ["farmland restoration plan"] "farmland restoration and climate
51 resiliency plan" means a conservation plan of the United States
52 Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, a
53 conservation plan of a soil and water conservation district established
54 pursuant to section 22a-315 or a conservation plan approved by the
55 Commissioner of Agriculture. ["Farmland restoration plan"] "Farmland
56 restoration and climate resiliency plan" includes agricultural restoration
57 and climate-smart agricultural and forestry plans, practices and
58 purposes, as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act, and
59 conservation and restoration plans for leased or franchised shellfish
60 beds.

61 Sec. 2. Section 22-6d of the general statutes is repealed and the
62 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2022*):

63 As used in section 22-6e: "Commissioner" means the Commissioner
64 of Agriculture; "department" means the Department of Agriculture;
65 "garden" means a piece of land appropriate for the cultivation of herbs,
66 fruits, flowers, or vegetables; "sponsor" means any municipal agency or
67 nonprofit civic service association or organization designated by the
68 commissioner to operate a program pursuant to section 22-6e; "use"
69 means, when applied to gardening, to make use of, without conveyance
70 of title or any other ownership; "vacant public land" means any land
71 owned by the state, or any municipality therein, that is not in use for
72 public purposes; ["agricultural restoration purposes"] "agricultural
73 restoration and climate-smart agricultural and forestry plans, practices
74 and purposes" means reclamation of grown-over pastures and
75 meadows, installation of fences in restoration areas to keep wildlife out
76 of such areas, manage livestock and to keep livestock out of riparian
77 areas, climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices, as defined by the
78 United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources
79 Conservation Service, including such practices in urban communities,
80 soil health improvements, replanting of vegetation on erosion prone
81 land or along streams, restoration and improvement of water runoff
82 patterns, improvement of water sources and irrigation efficiency,
83 conducting hedgerow and woodlot management, including the removal

84 of invasive plants and timber, purchasing farm equipment to improve
85 soil health or renovating farm ponds through farm pond management
86 and any incidental land clearing activities attendant to such
87 reclamation, installation, restoration, replanting, improvement,
88 management or renovating.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22-6c
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2022</i>	22-6d

Statement of Purpose:

To provide for reimbursement or payment of agricultural restoration plans that include climate-smart practices, as defined by the United State Department of Agriculture.

[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.]