AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.

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

Section 1. Section 22-6c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective October 1, 2022):

(a) The Commissioner of Agriculture may pay, in advance, or reimburse any farmer for part of the cost of compliance with a comprehensive farm nutrient management plan or a farm resources management plan, provided such plan has been approved by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection. The Commissioner of Agriculture, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, may certify for payment or reimbursement comprehensive farm nutrient management or farm resources management plan practices that have been approved by the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection pursuant to this section. The total federal and state grant available to a farmer shall not be more than ninety per cent of such cost. In making grants under this subsection, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall give priority to
capital improvements made in accordance with a comprehensive farm nutrient management plan, a farmland restoration and climate resiliency plan or a farm resources management plan prepared pursuant to section 22a-354m.

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

(c) For purposes of this section, "farmer" includes, but is not limited to, any lessee or franchise holder of a state or town shellfish bed and
"farmland restoration plan" means a conservation plan of the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, a conservation plan of a soil and water conservation district established pursuant to section 22a-315 or a conservation plan approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture. "Farmland restoration and climate resiliency plan" includes agricultural restoration and climate-smart agricultural and forestry plans, practices and purposes, as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act, and conservation and restoration plans for leased or franchised shellfish beds.

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

As used in section 22-6e: "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Agriculture; "department" means the Department of Agriculture; "garden" means a piece of land appropriate for the cultivation of herbs, fruits, flowers, or vegetables; "sponsor" means any municipal agency or nonprofit civic service association or organization designated by the commissioner to operate a program pursuant to section 22-6e; "use" means, when applied to gardening, to make use of, without conveyance of title or any other ownership; "vacant public land" means any land owned by the state, or any municipality therein, that is not in use for public purposes; "agricultural restoration purposes" means reclamation of grown-over pastures and meadows, installation of fences in restoration areas to keep wildlife out of such areas, manage livestock and to keep livestock out of riparian areas, climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, including such practices in urban communities, soil health improvements, replanting of vegetation on erosion prone land or along streams, restoration and improvement of water runoff patterns, improvement of water sources and irrigation efficiency, conducting hedgerow and woodlot management, including the removal
of invasive plants and timber, purchasing farm equipment to improve
soil health or renovating farm ponds through farm pond management
and any incidental land clearing activities attendant to such
reclamation, installation, restoration, replanting, improvement,
management or renovating.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following
sections:

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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>October 1, 2022</td>
<td>22-6c</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>October 1, 2022</td>
<td>22-6d</td>
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**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.]