



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 243**

February Session, 2022



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 Section 22-6c of the general statutes is repealed and the  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

46 (c) For purposes of this section, "farmer" includes, but is not limited  
47 to, any lessee or franchise holder of a state or town shellfish bed and  
48 ["farmland restoration plan"] "farmland restoration and climate  
49 resiliency plan" means a conservation plan of the United States  
50 Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, a  
51 conservation plan of a soil and water conservation district established

52 pursuant to section 22a-315 or a conservation plan approved by the  
53 Commissioner of Agriculture. ["Farmland restoration plan"] "Farmland  
54 restoration and climate resiliency plan" includes agricultural restoration  
55 purposes, as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act, and  
56 conservation and restoration plans for leased or franchised shellfish  
57 beds.

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

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

**ENV**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*