

C O N N E C T I C U T
Land Conservation Council

April 23, 2018

Sent via email to Committee Clerk: Robin.Bumpen@cga.ct.gov
Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

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

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC), I write in support of a 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 Farmland Preservation Program.

As the State's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+ land trusts, CLCC advocates for land conservation, stewardship, and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

In furtherance of our mission, CLCC supports programs which protect and enhance the viability of working lands, including the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). The FPP enables the agency to permanently preserve working lands for agricultural use by acquiring development rights to the properties ("PDR process"). For the past forty years, the program has protected 353 farms and 45,078 acres of farmland in the state.

"Buy-Protect-Sell" (BPS) is a tool to ensure that agricultural lands are protected, even when landowners are unable to work through the PDR process. In a BPS transaction, the Department would purchase farmland outright in fee (thereby removing it from the market where it could be at risk of development), then work with a land trust or other qualified organization to permanently protect the property through the PDR process, and finally sell the land subject to the easement to a farmer.

A technical correction enabling the Department to undertake BPS projects would enhance the efficiency and efficacy of the PDR program, provide farmers seeking land with more affordable options, and protect valuable farmland from being developed or otherwise taken out of agricultural production.

We respectfully urge the Committee to move forward with this proposed amendment.

Thank-you for your consideration and for your continued support of the state's land conservation and farmland preservation programs. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director

