



Resolution No. 2019-30

A Resolution Enhancing the Prioritization of Farmland Preservation in Cumberland County

WHEREAS, preserving our county's rich farm acreage is an established goal and priority of Cumberland County, as outlined in the county's comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, according to a public opinion survey conducted in conjunction with the development of the county's most recent comprehensive plan, 90 percent of survey respondents said preserving farmland was important to them, and 81 percent said they supported an increase in funding from the county budget for farmland preservation; and

WHEREAS, county funding earmarked for farmland preservation has fluctuated over the years, without a consistent funding methodology, as other funding priorities have taken precedence and funding for farmland preservation in the development of the budget has often been among the last items for budgetary consideration; and

WHEREAS, funding for the preservation of the county's rich soils and prime farmland is a critical investment in the future of our agricultural economy, helps to guarantee the continuation of local food production, and protects our natural environment, including our county's important ground water supplies; and

WHEREAS, for every \$1 committed by the county for farmland preservation, the county is able to draw down a state grant and state match of more than \$2 for the preservation of prime farmland in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, for three decades, the county's farmland preservation program, in concert with the state's program, has resulted in the preservation of 20,000 acres of prime farmland in Cumberland County; and

WHEREAS, while the milestone of the preservation of 20,000 acres of Cumberland County farmland is a significant achievement, the need to bolster support for this priority goal of the county is evidenced by the fact that the 20,000 acres preserved represents only about 12 percent of the county's approximate 169,000 acres of working farmland; and

WHEREAS, the county's Agricultural Land Preservation Board, in order to stretch resources to preserve more farm acreage in the county, looks to continue to foster municipal farmland preservation partnerships and take other steps, including the consideration of preserving prime farmland out of ranking order when there's a contribution of 50 percent or more of the easement value; and

WHEREAS, there, nonetheless, remains a need for a consistent budgetary policy that addresses the need for additional resources to preserve additional prime farm acres as the number of applications from farm owners interested in preserving their farms has long outstripped available resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that there is hereby established a policy goal, and budgetary policy, of Cumberland County providing for the allocation of necessary resources, including a County General Fund contribution, to secure the preservation of at least 30,000 acres of working farmland by 2030; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County's Planning Department, Farmland Preservation Program staff, and Finance Department are hereby directed, commencing with the 2020 program year, to annually budget for the certification to the state of the necessary county and available state, federal, municipal and other private donations and partner resources, including what's needed in the form of a County General Fund contribution, to preserve working and prime farm acreage in near equal increments of approximately 900 acres annually to achieve the objective of preserving at least 30,000 acres by 2030; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this policy shall remain in effect until altered, or otherwise amended by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners.

Adopted this 9th day of October, 2019.

ATTEST:

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Sandy Moyle, Chief Clerk


Vincent T. DiFilippo, Chairman


Jim Hertzler, Vice-Chairman

Seal:

Gary Eichelberger, Secretary