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**Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association**

**2014 Policy Positions**

**Top Six**

1. **We oppose any proposal that would transfer funds from cigarette tax collections, which are currently dedicated to farmland preservation, to be used for any other purpose.**
2. **We support a revision of the state funding formula to reduce the importance of county realty transfer tax revenue as a factor in a county’s annual state allocation.**
3. **We support the protection of soils, prime, unique and of statewide importance to the greatest extent attainable, from activities such as acquisition of rights of way and the installation or construction of facilities for sewer, water, oil or natural gas, which would impact the use of the preserved land for agricultural production.**
4. **We support a share of a severance tax or impact fee for oil and gas drilling, for funding farmland preservation.**
5. **We support the renewal of Growing Greener in Pennsylvania.**

**Funding**

1. We oppose any proposal that would transfer funds from cigarette tax collections, which are currently dedicated to farmland preservation, to be used for any other purpose.
2. We support a share of a severance tax or impact fee for oil and gas drilling, for funding farmland preservation.
3. We support the renewal of Growing Greener in Pennsylvania.
4. We support the option for counties to enact other dedicated funding sources through a tax or a fee, with revenues dedicated to preservation of farmland.
5. We support a special farmland preservation registration plate to promote and generate revenue for farmland preservation.
6. We support increased funding through the 2012 Farm Bill to preserve America’s farmland as a matter of national security. Protecting farmland is essential to our nation’s long-term ability to produce food, fiber and renewable energy.

**Act 43 and Regulations**

1. We support the option for counties to charge reasonable fees for administrative services associated with the acquisition, monitoring and enforcement of agricultural conservation easements.
2. We support the option for counties to use a portion of their annual state appropriation for costs related to monitoring and enforcement of agricultural conservation easements, including the legal defense of agricultural conservation easements.
3. We support the option for the owner of a preserved farm or farm proposed for preservation to voluntarily relinquish their right to construct an additional residential structure and/or their right for subdivision.
4. We support the reinstatement of a $10,000/acre cap on the state share of the purchase price of an agricultural conservation easement.
5. We oppose the use of preserved farms for recreational trails.
6. We support the removal of the requirement for an annual on-farm inspection and the authority for counties to use other monitoring methods to meet their obligation to monitor preserved farms annually.
7. We support a revision of the state funding formula to reduce the importance of county realty transfer tax revenue as a factor in a county’s annual state allocation.

9. We oppose eliminating required review by the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board for any proposed condemnation of preserved farmland.

10. We support the option to amend existing agricultural conservation easements by adding additional farmland to the easement for the purpose of increasing the acreage of the preserved farm.

11. We oppose expanding current permissions for oil and gas development and removal of coal by underground mining methods to include energy production by other methods or extraction of other minerals or use of other development or extraction methods.

12. We support merging separately described tracts of land comprising one farm that will be subject to one agricultural conservation easement prior to or concurrently with the recording of the agricultural conservation easement.

13. We support the use of alternative energy systems that generate power principally for use on a preserved farm.

14. We support the option for counties to reduce the minimum required weight for soil quality in the farmland ranking system from 40 points to 30 points.

15. We support that only farms located in areas of a county that have been identified for future agricultural use by local comprehensive plans, official maps and zoning ordinances, be eligible for easement purchase, to the extent that these planning tools are available in a county.

16. We support legislation to provide a clear definition of appurtenant facilities and limits on the size and location of such appurtenant facilities on preserved farmland.

17. We oppose easements and other deed restrictions which would restrict the use of preserved farmland for agricultural production and normal farm operations.

**Tax Incentives**

1. We support making the federal enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent.
2. We support permanently exempting farmland from estate taxes as long as the land remains in agriculture.
3. We support the establishment of the Historic Preservation Incentive Program.

**Conservation**

1. We support the protection of fresh groundwater and the protection of water supplies in the Commonwealth from any activities that compromise water quality or quantity.

2. We support the protection of soils, prime, unique and of statewide importance to the greatest extent attainable, from activities such as the installation or construction of rights of way for sewer, water, oil or natural gas, which would impact the use of the preserved land for agricultural production.

3. We oppose forced pooling of natural gas. Landowners must not be denied the right to oppose the drilling of/for natural gas or other minerals on their land.

**Other**

1. We support efforts to align the FRPP appraisal requirements with Pennsylvania’s established and accepted appraisal requirements to streamline the FRPP reimbursement process.

2. We oppose the Family Farm Initiative & Enterprise Land Development Act.