



Senate Bill No. 346

Public Act No. 15-22

AN ACT CONCERNING THE FARMLAND RESTORATION AND VACANT LANDS PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

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 Section 22-6c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

(a) The Commissioner of Agriculture may 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 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 or a farm resources plan prepared pursuant

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to section 22a-354m.

(b) The Commissioner of Agriculture may reimburse any farmer for part of the cost [associated with developing] to develop, implement and comply with a farm resources management plan or a farmland restoration plan intended to restore farmland, provided such plan has been approved by the commissioner. [and such] Such reimbursement [does] 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. Such plan may require agricultural restoration purposes, as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act.

(c) For purposes of this section, "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 plan" includes "agricultural restoration purposes", as defined in section 22-6d, as amended by this act.

Sec. 2. Section 22-6d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

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

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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] 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, replanting of vegetation on erosion prone land or along streams, restoration of water runoff patterns, improvement of irrigation efficiency, conducting hedgerow management, including the removal of invasive plants and timber, 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.

Approved June 4, 2015