



Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association

A Non-Partisan Association of professionals who administer the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Farmland Preservation Program

PFPA Policy Platform

We support the permanent preservation, conservation and protection of Pennsylvania farmland to encourage its development and improvement for the production of food and other agricultural products; as a valued natural and ecological resource which provides needed open space for clean air, clean water as well as for aesthetic purposes; and so that agricultural land may be protected and enhanced as a viable segment of Pennsylvania's economy and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance.

We support encouraging landowners to make a long-term commitment to agriculture by offering them financial incentives and security of land use, and by providing compensation in exchange for their relinquishment of the right to develop their private property.

We support protecting farming operations from incompatible nonfarm land uses that may render farming impracticable, and the permanent preservation of Pennsylvania farmland in areas planned for agriculture in a manner that directs and accommodates growth.

We support increased public funding and incentives dedicated to the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements and leveraging public funds through donations, bargain sales and public/private partnerships in order to increase the funds available for agricultural conservation easement purchases.

We support protecting the investment of taxpayers in agricultural conservation easements through best management practices on preserved farmland and monitoring and defending legal challenges to agricultural conservation easements.

We support the authority of counties to innovate and adapt their programs to meet local needs and priorities, to reflect modern farming practices and to utilize the best available methods and technologies to effectively and efficiently administer their programs.

Attached here are the policy positions voted by the membership of PFFA. Adopted on June 16, 2011, they are subject to change as new challenges arise and previous ones become resolved.

2011 Policy Positions

1. We support authority for counties to enact other dedicated funding sources through a tax or a fee, with revenues dedicated to preservation of farmland.
2. 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.
3. We support making the federal enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent.
4. We support efforts to align the FRPP appraisal requirements with Pennsylvania's established and accepted appraisal requirements to streamline the FRPP reimbursement process.
5. We support permanently exempting farmland from estate taxes as long as the land remains in agriculture.
6. We oppose eliminating required review by the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board for any proposed condemnation of preserved farmland.
7. We support a share of a severance tax or impact fee for oil and gas drilling, if enacted, for funding farmland preservation.
8. We support removal of the requirement to notify landowners by certified mail prior to an annual monitoring visit.
9. We support the use of alternative energy systems that generate power principally for use on a preserved farm.
10. We support the removal of current language in the Act that provides for the repurchase of an Agricultural Conservation Easement by the owner of a preserved farm after 25 years.
11. We support the ability to amend existing agricultural conservation easements by adding additional farmland to the easement for the purpose of increasing the acreage of the preserved farm.
12. We support the renewal of Growing Greener in Pennsylvania.

13. 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.
14. We support the ability of 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.
15. We support the authority of counties to charge reasonable fees for administrative services associated with the acquisition, monitoring and enforcement of agricultural conservation easements.
16. 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.
17. We support the authority 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.
18. 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.
19. We support the taxation of Natural Gas Extraction.
20. We support the reinstatement of a \$10,000/acre cap on the state share of the purchase price of an agricultural conservation easement.
21. 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.
22. We oppose expanding current permissions for oil and gas development and removal of coal by underground mining methods to include permission to extract other minerals or use other development or extraction methods.
23. 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.
24. We support the ability for counties to reduce the minimum required weight for soil quality in the farmland ranking system from 40 points to 30 points.

25. We oppose the use of preserved farms for recreational trails.
26. We support the establishment of the Historic Preservation Incentive Program.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. We oppose the Family Farm Initiative & Enterprise Land Development Act.
30. 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.
31. We support a special farmland preservation registration plate to promote and generate revenue for farmland preservation.