



Agriculture Land Preservation Policy Recommendation

The Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council encourages the preservation of agricultural land, as well as the creation of land banks and trusts. Ensuring growers' access to land in perpetuity helps guarantee agricultural and horticultural activities are accessible to all people in the urban and rural areas of our ten-county region. This policy recommendation emphasizes agricultural land.

Good farmland and fertile soil are limited resources and make up only a small fraction of our nation's undeveloped land. Regional food security is essential to a secure and sustainable future instead of relying on an industrial food system that spans thousands of miles. As population and the cost of fossil fuels continues to grow there is a greater need to preserve and expand remaining farmland. The Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council (GCRFPC) recommends careful review of state and local policies and programs that protect productive farmland by maintaining the economic viability of agriculture and promoting and making active use of these programs. It is important and necessary to provide farmers with voluntary and financially competitive alternatives to selling their land for nonagricultural uses. Governments will gain matching funds for farmland preservation programs when they create and use fund pools.

1. The GCRFPC supports legislation, ordinances, and policies that equitably incorporates agricultural land preservation into long range planning consistent with principles of smart growth at the state, county, and municipal levels. And encourages creating fund pools to gain matching funds for farmland preservation programs that will increase conservation acreage.

2. The GCRFPC supports legislation, ordinances, and policies that protect agricultural lands. Such policies should:

- Recognize important agricultural land and soil as valuable natural resources that all levels of government should protect for future generations.
- Require that state funds for infrastructure facilities, especially for highways and sewer facilities, not be provided unless the OH/KY/IN Departments of Agriculture or other stakeholders (such as Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association) finds that the facilities will not be detrimental to the continuation of agriculture in the area.
- Explicitly authorize county and municipal governments to adopt agricultural zoning ordinances, that allow farmers to opt in, as an appropriate technique for protecting and expanding agricultural land and soil wherein agriculture is the recognized long-term use.

Such agricultural zones would limit nonagricultural development to densities and development patterns that are consistent with the continuation of agriculture.

- Explicitly authorize county and municipal governments to adopt and fund purchases of development rights and transfer of development rights programs for the preservation or expansion of prime agricultural land.

3. The GCRFPC supports re-authorized and increased funding for state and federal grants to state and local governments for the purchase of development rights to agricultural land.

4. The GCRFPC supports state legislation that links incentives to continue farming (such as state income tax credits, differential assessment for property taxes, and purchase or transfer of development rights).

5. The GCRFPC supports state legislation that authorizes local governments to levy a tax on the conversion of important agricultural land to non-farm uses in areas designated for agricultural land preservation.

6. The GCRFPC supports state legislation that requires local comprehensive plans to address the preservation of agricultural land and to specify programs and techniques for its protection.

7. The GCRFPC supports state funding for ongoing agricultural land and monitoring programs and a statewide land classification system in order to document the amount of land (and types of soil on that land) in farm production and the rate at which it is being converted to non-farm uses.

8. The GCRFPC supports federal and state farm policies that maintain the economic viability of agriculture through value added products and industries which use materials from agriculture, as a means of protecting agricultural land usage.

9. The GCRFPC supports federal, state, and local farm policies that advocate for voluntary conservation and preservation policies, practices, and programs that preserve eco-system services (i.e. land, soil, water supplies) in perpetuity.

10. The GCRFPC supports legislation that provides long-term stability of tax formulation (such as Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV)) and/or protects farmers when land evaluations soar.