

LANGLADE COUNTY



RESOLUTION #11-2023

INTRODUCED BY: AG & EXTENSION and LAND CONSERVATION SOLID WASTE

INTENT: MODERNIZE AND IMPROVE THE WISCONSIN FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) was established in 1978 to protect the state's most valuable agricultural lands from development, and two avenues were created via legislation: local land use zoning or a special agreement with Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Landowners who participated in the program were then eligible for a Wisconsin state income tax credit, if they met the financial criteria and the state's soil conservation standards. The peak years of the program resulted in approximately 23,900 statewide participants; and,

WHEREAS, in 2009, Wisconsin made significant changes to the FPP administrative codes and statutes as part of the Working Lands Initiative, a suite of programs to protect farmland from development. Among the many changes to the FPP were setting new flat rates per acre for the income tax credits, adding a process for local areas to establish Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA), establishing a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Program, and finally adding additional conservation standards; and,

WHEREAS, since the FPP rules were amended in 2009, the costs of implementing the required conservation standards have increased to a point where in some cases the cost of participating in the program has exceeded the available tax credits, which in turn has impacted the statewide program participation, currently estimated at 12,000 participants; and,

WHEREAS, the premise of the FPP tax credit was to ensure landowners were compensated for their conservation stewardship and to help offset the costs of implementing and maintaining the required conservation practices. To date this program has been the best available tool to ensure conservation best management practices are being maintained statewide; and,

WHEREAS, the long-term net result of aforesaid changes was a decrease in the value of the tax credits to maintain the conservation standards which in turn has decreased the overall enrollment statewide. This decrease in enrollment is alarming and needs to be addressed as soon as possible; and,

WHEREAS, local units of government, towns and counties continue to pursue the purchase of agricultural conservation easements through locally funded programs with, in some cases, United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service grants. Also, numerous agricultural conservation easements (ACE) have been donated to local land trusts. Many of the donated ACEs remain eligible for the FPP but are not recognized by DATCP for their true farmland preservation value; and,

WHEREAS, Local units of government, towns and counties spend considerable staff resources supporting landowners enrolling in the program, offering guidance for improving farmland, and conducting compliance checks needed to qualify for the tax credit.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Langlade County Board of Supervisors hereby supports and urges the Wisconsin Legislature to pass legislation to modernize and improve the Farmland Preservation Program to increase the allowable tax credits; amend the program eligibility to allow landowners who have Agricultural Conservation Easements the ability to participate in the FPP, if they meet the financial and conservation criteria; establish a new tax credit level for Agricultural Conservation Easements; increase the frequency of review of the Farmland Preservation Program allowable tax credits to assure they are meeting the basic costs associated with program participation; and expand eligibility of the FPP planning grant funds to support program implementation to be utilized by counties, local municipalities, planning commissions, and tribal governments for their FPP implementation efforts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be forwarded by the County Clerk to the Governor of the State of Wisconsin and State Senators and State Representatives representing Langlade County.

AG & EXTENSION and LAND CONSERVATION SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE:


Ronald Krueger, Sr., Chairman

Rick Bina

Rick Bina

Doug Curler

Doug Curler

absent

James Schulz

Sally Mulhollon

Sally Mulhollon

FISCAL NOTE: No Fiscal Note.

ADOPTED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF LANGLADE
COUNTY THIS 21th DAY OF April, 2023.

Judy Nagel, Langlade Co. Clerk
Judy Nagel, Langlade County Clerk

RP