

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Conservation Agenda 2019

Introduction

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the state's land conservation community. Among CLCC's constituents are land trusts (there are 137+ in Connecticut), municipal conservation commissions, garden clubs, and local and statewide conservation advocacy groups – each managed, supported, and governed by concerned residents. CLCC is a primary resource and voice for land conservation issues statewide.

CLCC believes that strong and sustainable land conservation is essential to a healthy environment and strong economy. Land conservation plays a crucial role in protecting and enhancing water quality, ensuring clean air, creating wildlife habitats, offsetting impacts of climate change, enabling access to locally grown foods and products, and providing opportunities for the public to enjoy the natural, scenic, cultural, historic and esthetic qualities of the environment for generations to come.

Land is a finite resource. Once gone, it's gone forever; and it is the responsibility and moral obligation of our current generation to ensure that future generations receive the same benefits derived from land conservation that we enjoy today.

CLCC works with, and encourages our constituents and partners to work with, members of the legislature on policy issues impacting land conservation in Connecticut. To that end, CLCC intends to pursue the following legislative and policy priorities in the 2019 Session of the Connecticut General Assembly.

2019 State Policy and Funding Priorities

Support Funding and Staff for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Open Space and other State Land Conservation and Farmland Protection Programs

- ENSURE consistent and increased funding for state land conservation programs including Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Program, Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust Program, Recreational Trails & Greenways Program, and the Department of Agriculture's (DoAg) Farmland Preservation Program.
- PROTECT the Community Investment Act, which generates funding for state programs for open space, farmland/dairy production, historic preservation and affordable housing. Enhance public awareness of the importance of the fund and ensure that the integrity and level of funding are protected.
- ENSURE Passport to the Parks funds are dedicated to operations and maintenance of State Parks to keep State Parks and campgrounds open, attract over 8 million visitors/year, and generate revenues for local and state economies.
- PROTECT DEEP and DoAg as stand-alone agencies.
- PROTECT the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as an independent watch-dog agency.

Pursue Programs to Incentivize Land Conservation and Stewardship

- PURSUE pilot legislation enabling select municipalities to collect up to 1% of real estate conveyance fee on buyers to support the acquisition and stewardship of local open space including water resources and farmland.
- PROTECT existing and explore new tax incentives and exemptions that benefit land conservation.
- EXPLORE the establishment of a public-private partnership program to offer competitive matching grants to qualified Connecticut land trusts for programs that serve to advance land conservation through: (i) organizational capacity building; (ii) collaboration; (iii) stewardship and resource management; and (v) conservation transaction support.

Protection of Watershed Lands

- SUPPORT adoption of the State Water Plan.
- SUPPORT efforts to protect Class I and II Watershed Lands and to ensure that laws and policies protecting such lands are not weakened.
- SUPPORT efforts to better enable land trusts to protect Class III watershed lands that enhance their existing land holdings and work to create regional greenways.

2019 Federal Policy and Funding Priorities

- SUPPORT passage of and appropriations for critical federal conservation programs, including: Recovering America's Wildlife Act, Land & Water Conservation Fund, USDA Conservation Title Programs (*Including the Farm Bill*), USDA Forest Service Programs (*including Forest Legacy Program*) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Programs (*including State Wildlife Grants Program*).
- PROTECT tax laws and regulations that incentivize charitable giving to land trusts and other non-profits.
- OPPOSE roll-backs of laws and regulations which protect land, water, air, and other natural resources.

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

www.ctconservation.org

For more information contact:
Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director
abpaterson@ctconservation.org
(860) 614-8537

