

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 1999

SESSION LAW 2000-171
HOUSE BILL 1132

AN ACT TO PROMOTE THE PRESERVATION OF FARMLAND AND TO
PROMOTE SMALL, FAMILY-OWNED FARMS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 106-744(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) There is established a 'North Carolina Farmland Preservation Trust Fund' to be administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The Trust Fund shall consist of all monies received for the purpose of purchasing agricultural conservation easements or transferred from counties or private sources. The Trust Fund shall be invested as provided in G.S. 147-69.2 and G.S. 147-69.3. The Commissioner shall use Trust Fund monies for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements, including transaction costs, and shall distribute Trust Fund monies ~~to counties and private nonprofit conservation organizations~~ for such purchases, including transaction ~~costs~~. costs, as follows:

- (1) To a private nonprofit conservation organization that matches thirty percent (30%) of the Trust Fund monies it receives with funds from sources other than the Trust Fund.
- (2) To counties according to the match requirements under subsection (c1) of this section.

(c1) A county that is an enterprise tier four county or an enterprise tier five county, as these tiers are defined in G.S. 105-129.3(a), and that has prepared a countywide farmland protection plan shall match fifteen percent (15%) of the Trust Fund monies it receives with county funds. A county that has not prepared a countywide farmland protection plan shall match thirty percent (30%) of the Trust Fund monies it receives with county funds. A county that is an enterprise tier one county, an enterprise tier two county, or an enterprise tier three county, as these counties are defined in G.S. 105-129.3(a), and that has prepared a countywide farmland protection plan shall not be required to match any of the Trust Fund monies it receives with county funds.

(c2) The Commissioner of Agriculture shall adopt rules ~~and regulations~~ governing the use, distribution, investment, and management of Trust Fund monies."

Section 2. G.S. 106-744 is amended by adding two new subsections to read:

"(e) As used in subsection (c1) of this section, a countywide farmland protection plan means a plan that satisfies all of the following requirements:

- (1) The countywide farmland protection plan shall contain a list and description of existing agricultural activity in the county.
- (2) The countywide farmland protection plan shall contain a list of existing challenges to continued family farming in the county.
- (3) The countywide farmland protection plan shall contain a list of opportunities for maintaining or enhancing small, family-owned farms and the local agricultural economy.
- (4) The countywide farmland protection plan shall describe how the county plans to maintain a viable agricultural community and shall address farmland preservation tools, such as agricultural economic development, including farm diversification and marketing assistance; other kinds of agricultural technical assistance, such as farm infrastructure financing, farmland purchasing, linking with younger farmers, and estate planning; the desirability and feasibility of donating agricultural conservation easements, and entering into voluntary agricultural districts.
- (5) The countywide farmland protection plan shall contain a schedule for implementing the plan and an identification of possible funding sources for the long-term support of the plan.

(f) A countywide farmland protection plan that meets the requirements of subsection (e) of this section may be formulated with the assistance of an agricultural advisory board designated pursuant to G.S. 106-739."

Section 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2000.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 10th day of July, 2000.

s/ Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ James B. Hunt, Jr.
Governor

Approved 10:01 a.m. this 2nd day of August, 2000