

RESOLUTION #1
TO RESTORE 3.6 MILLION IN FUNDING TO UW EXTENSION

WHEREAS, the UW Extension budget was cut 3.6 million dollars as part of the 250 million dollar reduction to the University of Wisconsin budget in the 2015-2017 State of Wisconsin budget representing the deepest cut to UW Extension in 103 years; and

WHEREAS, the UW Extension mission is to teach, learn, lead, and serve by connecting the public with the University of Wisconsin and engage with them in transforming lives; and

WHEREAS, over 50 UW Extension educator positions are unfilled in 2018; and

WHEREAS, agriculturally dependent counties throughout the state are without agriculture agents (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sunday, April 22, 2018 article); and

WHEREAS, farmers are stressed with low grain and milk prices; and

WHEREAS, the local county agent is the first point of contact for any questions or concerns regarding agriculture, horticulture, and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, cuts to UW Extension have impacted not only agriculture but also family living, community development, youth development, and 4H; and

WHEREAS, the lives of youth need the positive role model provided by Youth Development and 4H programs; and

WHEREAS, the community thread is made stronger by strong youth programs; and

WHEREAS, UW Extension educators know local people, schools, and community's needs and how to best address those needs; and

WHEREAS, tragedies across the United States call for personalized, powerful, model leadership; and

WHEREAS, state spending on worker recruitment, rebates to families, and economic support for business is necessary, so is this investment in our children, families, and communities – the lifeblood of Wisconsin society.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we urge the State of Wisconsin restore the full 3.6 million dollars cut from the UW Extension budget to allow a restoration of all educator positions cut from various UW Extension programs.

Adopted by the North Central Land and Water Conservation Association members, David Solin, President, August 10, 2018.

RESOLUTION #2

RECOMMEND CHANGES TO THE WISCONSIN FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) was established in 1978 to protect the states most valuable agricultural lands from development. 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, the state of 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 has 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, as part of the FPP redesign, the state of Wisconsin recognized the importance of PACE as a valuable tool to complement the long-term preservation of the most valuable working farmlands in the State and subsequently enrolled 14 participants. The statewide program was defunded due to a controversial funding mechanism, but remains in the Wisconsin state statutes; and,

WHEREAS, Local units of government, towns and counties continue to pursue the purchase of agricultural 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 ACE's

remain eligible for the FPP but are not recognized by DATCP for their true farmland preservation value; and,

WHEREAS, WI Land+Water urges the State of Wisconsin to review the Farmland Preservation Program and increase each existing tax credit category by a minimum of \$2.50 per acre, add a new tax credit category to recognize landowners with ACEs and set the credit level for easements at a minimum tax credit level that can be found in the FPP zoned AEA's, and review the program every five years making the appropriate adjustments that reflect Best Management Practices (BMP) cost changes in the agriculture sector.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the WI Land+Water requests the State of Wisconsin review the Farmland Preservation Program statutes and administrative codes 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; reestablish funding for the statewide PACE program through a redesigned funding mechanism; and 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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to all state legislators, the governor, DATCP Secretary and the WI Counties Association.

Adopted by the Southern Area Land and Water Conservation Association October 25, 2018.

RESOLUTION #3

IN SUPPORT OF REFORMING WISCONSIN'S EMINENT DOMAIN LAWS

WHEREAS, many private property owners in Wisconsin feel their property rights, under current Wisconsin Law, are not adequately protected from encroachment by outside entities, be they local, out of state, or international; and,

WHEREAS, eminent domain has historically been used sparingly for ensuring the public good with provable need and just compensation; and,

WHEREAS, public good cannot be construed to mean promotion of projects for private gain by outside corporate entities; and,

WHEREAS, a clearly defined and demonstrated “public good” has historically included issues demonstrating a true community need such as roadways, schools, public parks, public housing, and community centers; and,

WHEREAS, any other claimed cause for the taking of private property shall be proven to be for a public good in court of law; and,

WHEREAS, eminent domain shall not be used for any taking which is not for public good; and,

WHEREAS, a special legislative commission on the use of eminent domain power for private gain would be established to allow the public and local communities to voice their concerns over its use for private gain and for the State Legislator to explore revisions and amendments to the current eminent domain requirements in Chapter 32 Wisconsin Statutes; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the WI Land+Water requests that State of Wisconsin establish a special legislative commission on the use of eminent domain for private gain in order to allow the State Legislature to pursue a change of law for the protection of its citizens’ private rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the governor, the state legislators, the Public Service Commission and the WI Counties Association.

Adopted by the Southern Area Land and Water Conservation Association October 25, 2018.