



COMMISSIONERS OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioners Approve Farmland Preservation Allocation

Cumberland County, Pa. – The Cumberland County Commissioners, in a split decision, allocated \$500,000 of county funds to the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program for the 2018 program year during last week’s finance committee meeting. Commissioners Vince DiFilippo and Jim Hertzler voted in favor of the allocation. Commissioner Gary Eichelberger opposed the funding. The County’s investment will leverage approximately \$2 million in additional state funding for the program. The allocation is level with funding received in 2017

The County currently has 26 farms on the waiting list for preservation. With this allocation, it is estimated that 950 – 1,000 of the 2,700 total acres on the list could be preserved. The County’s Planning and Finance Departments will also develop a long-term financial plan, showing the potential sources of income for the program and the impact these sources could have on the general fund budget. In addition, the Planning Department will pursue ways of partnering with County municipalities and Lancaster Farm Trust to preserve farms, as a means of sharing the cost of this program.

To date, Cumberland County has preserved almost 19,000 acres of prime farmland. This year, eight farms have accepted offers for preservation, with an additional two offers pending and two donations awaiting completion.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program was developed to strengthen Pennsylvania’s agricultural economy and to protect prime farmland. The program uses county, state, federal and local funds to pay willing farmers to place certain restrictions upon their land, in order to maintain and permanently preserve high quality, functional farmland. The land continues to be the farmer’s private property and the farmer retains all privileges of land ownership, except the ability to sell the land for non-agricultural development or to develop the land for non-agricultural purposes. An agricultural conservation easement is permanent; if a landowner wishes to sell the land, the easement is transferred and the new landowner must continue to use the property exclusively for agriculture.

For more information on Cumberland County’s Farmland Preservation Program, visit www.ccpa.net/farmland.

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