



**Working Lands Alliance**  
*A Project of American Farmland Trust*

## 2008 Legislative Agenda – 1/15/08

### Steering Committee

**Joseph Bonelli**

University of Connecticut  
Cooperative Extension

**Bonnie Burr**

USDA Farm Service Agency

**Cris Coffin, Vice-Chair**

American Farmland Trust

**Bill Duesing**

CT NOFA

**Gordon Gibson**

CT State Grange

**John Guskowski**

CME Associates

**Terry Jones, Chair**

Jones Family Farm, Shelton

**Henry Lord**

New Haven

**Jennifer McTiernan**

CitySeed

**Adam Moore**

CT Forest & Park Assoc.

**Elisabeth Moore**

CT Farmland Trust

**Lucy Nolan**

End Hunger CT!

**Steve Reviczky**

CT Farm Bureau Assoc.

**Richard Roberts**

Halloran & Sage

**Jim Smith**

Cushman Farm

**Melissa Spear**

Trust for Public Land

**Herm Weingart**

Franklin

1. WLA endorses the *Face of Connecticut* campaign that will: 1) commit \$20 million annually to the State's Farmland Preservation Program for the next ten years; 2) provide new funding for the protection of 'locally significant farms' that do not meet the criteria of our existing State Farmland Preservation Program; and 3) provide assistance to new farmers.
2. WLA opposes the use of state funds for economic development through the STEAP program that will lead to the permanent loss of prime farmland.
3. WLA supports the use of incentives that will encourage residents to protect farmland.
  - a. WLA supports the creation of a state tax credit for individuals who donate land or an interest in land on qualifying property for conservation purposes. The donation must protect conservation values as defined by the state of Connecticut and must be made to an entity qualified to hold such property interest.
  - b. WLA urges leaders to revise Connecticut Title 19 Medicaid regulations to exempt the donation of agricultural conservation easements on farmland from the 5 year look-back period that examines gifts and transfer of assets which trigger a penalty period for ineligibility.
4. WLA urges leaders to enact measures to ensure the long-term viability of the state's dairy industry, as the state's remaining dairy farms steward more than half of the Connecticut's remaining land in farms and provide important environmental and community benefits in addition to a valuable local source of fresh dairy products.
5. WLA endorses the concept of enabling legislation that would allow municipalities to raise funds for land protection through a real estate conveyance tax, provided that appropriate exemptions are included.
6. WLA recommends the creation of a new state-level review process that examines all municipal and state regulatory changes that impact agriculture and its use of farmland. WLA recognizes that municipalities are critical partners in fostering viable agriculture and leading local farmland preservation efforts, yet WLA is uncertain whether a majority of municipalities see the value of working farmland.
7. WLA opposes the concept of enabling municipal overlay zones ("Farm Restoration Zones") that would encourage new residential development on a farmland parcel in exchange for a term easement temporarily prohibiting the subdivision of the remainder of the parcel. (proposed in 2007 in House Amendment Schedule A LCO #9194, Section 11 on HB 7223).