

House Republican Press Release

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LEGISLATURE APPROVES LEGISLATION INTRODUCED BY REP. HOVEY TO PROMOTE RURAL PRESERVATION



The House of Representatives today approved legislation introduced by State Rep. DebraLee Hovey (R-Monroe, Newtown) that will prohibit local planning or zoning boards from eliminating farming or farm stands as a residential use. The legislation, which was an amendment to Senate Bill 872, An Act Establishing A Farmland

Preservation Advisory Board Within The Department Of Agriculture, now goes to Governor M. Jodi Rell for final approval.

“The legislation is an effort to help preserve Connecticut’s rural heritage,” said Rep. Hovey. “Farmlands and small farm stands are part of the quality of life we have come to appreciate and this measure enacts a needed level of protection for them.”

In addition, SB 872 requires the State Bond Commission to vote on the issuance of bonds that the legislature approved for agricultural land preservation programs but have not yet been allocated. It also creates a 12-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to help the Department of Agriculture (DOAG) with its purchase of development rights program and other efforts to preserve agricultural lands. It establishes the board's composition and duties.

The state's purchase of development rights or Farmland Preservation Program is its primary farmland preservation tool. Farmers may apply to the program through DOAG, which evaluates applications according to criteria set in state regulation. Preserving farmland that contains a high percentage of prime farmland soils in established farm communities is the program's primary goal. The new Farmland Preservation Advisory Board will be charged with evaluating and providing comments and recommendations on the purchase of development rights and may recommend other changes to the program.