

Midwest Easement  
Toolkit:

Developing PDR  
Programs



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# Kane County Local Food and Farm Program

- Kane County Farmland Protection Program
  - Ordinance 01-67
- Growing for Kane Local Foods Program
  - Ordinance 13-10



# How to structure a PACE program



## Kane County, Illinois Case Study

- Implementation of Comprehensive Plan
- Hired AFT to lead the process, two papers presented to County Board. Example from Township of Dunn, Wi
- One farmer self-identified that they would participate
- \$ 5 million allocated from gaming revenue for year 1.
- Ordinance 01-67 approved by County Board April 2001



# Focus Group → Future Farmland Commission

interactive  
group  
setting



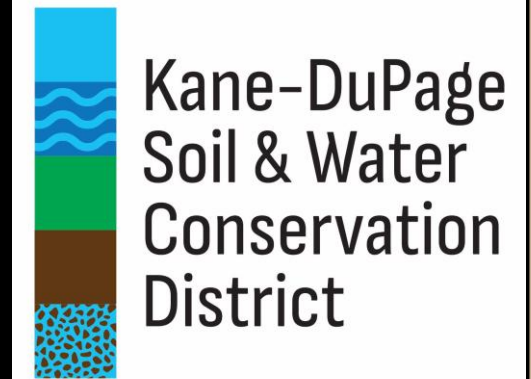
County Farm Bureau



Elected Official  
and Champion

The Comprehensive Plan

Plan Commission



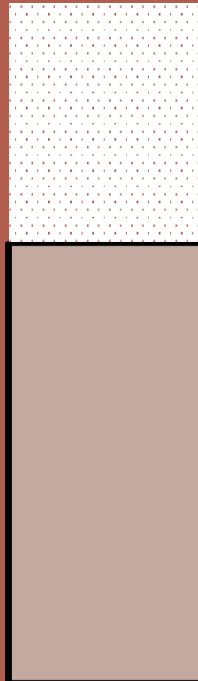
Soil and Water  
Conservation District

+ Local Farmers!!





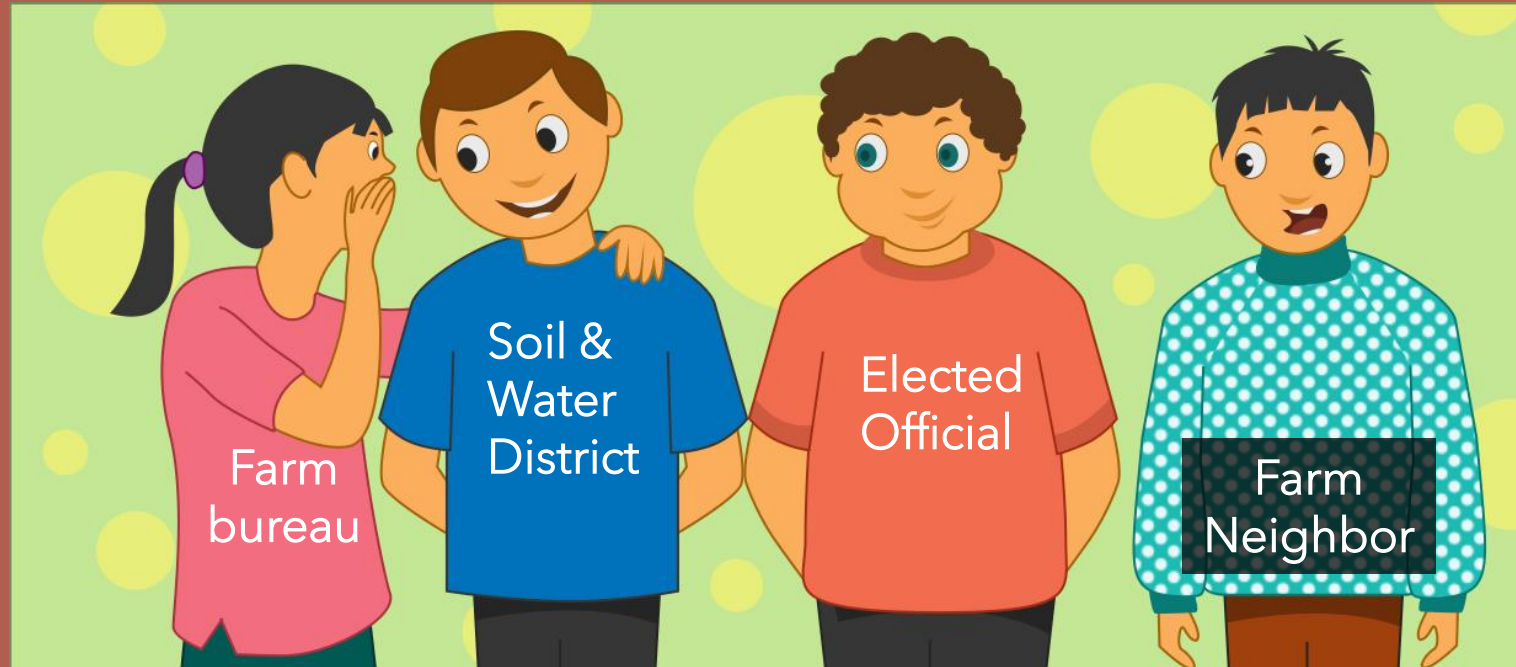
Agriculture  
value



Development  
right value to be  
extinguished



## First Closing



- Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933
- Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938
- Agricultural Act of 1948
- Agricultural Act of 1949
- Agricultural Act of 1954
- Agricultural Act of 1956
- Food and Agriculture Act of 1965
- Agricultural Act of 1970
- Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973
- Food and Agriculture Act of 1977
- Agriculture and Food Act of 1981
- Food Security Act of 1985
- Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990
- Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996
- Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002
- Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008
- Agricultural Act of 2014
- Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018



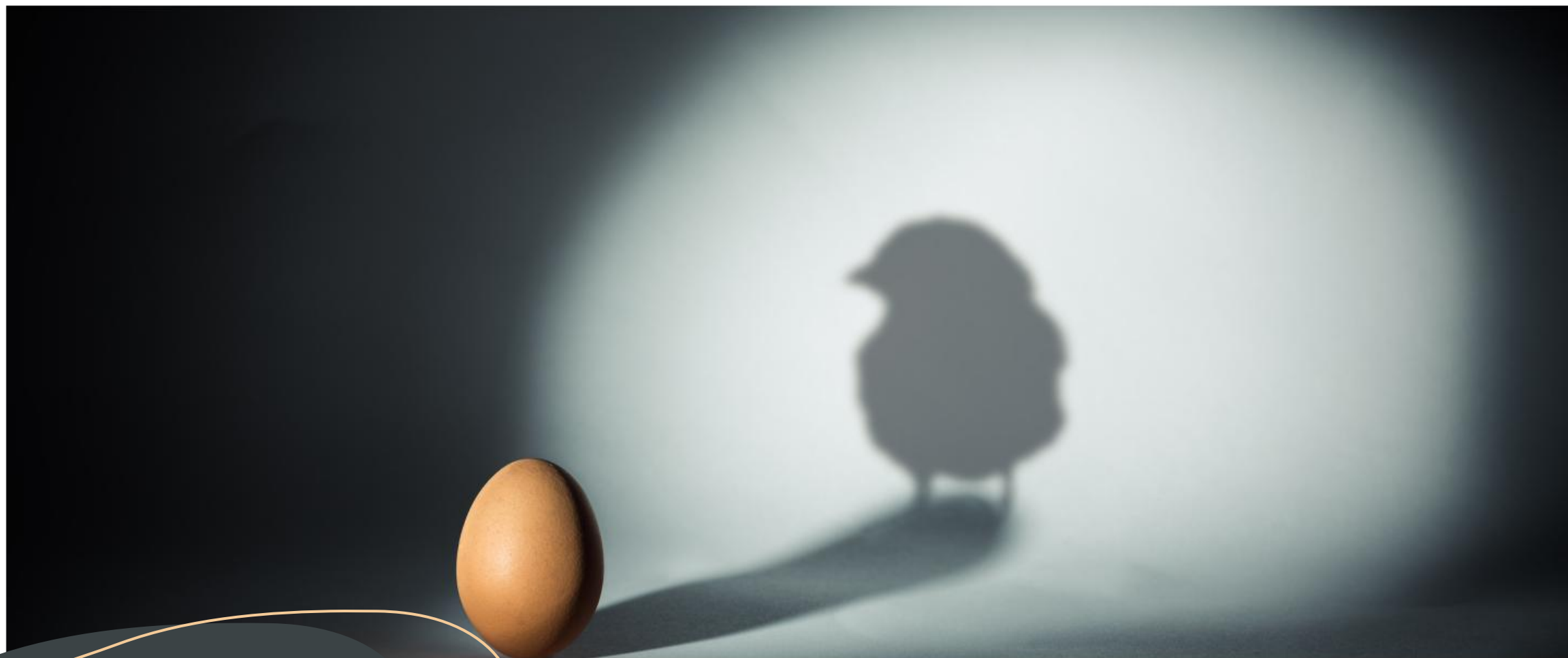
Kane County  
applies for Federal  
Funding match in  
2002







# The funding question



# How to structure a PACE program

Without Funding

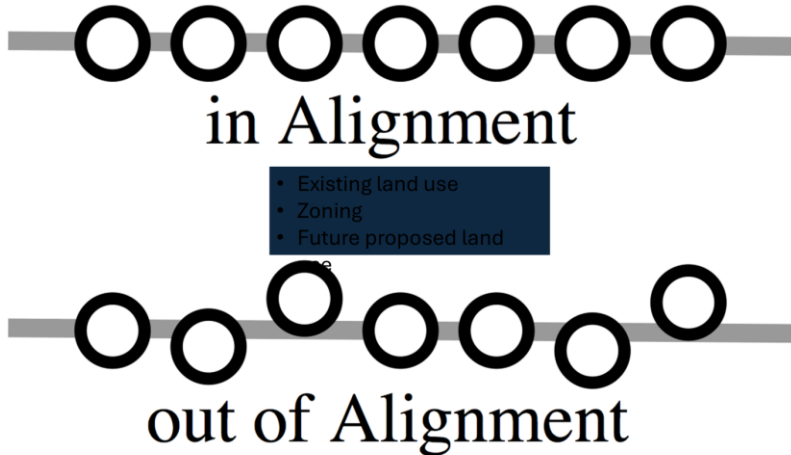


WHEREAS, the Kane county Board find and determines that the adoption and implementation of the Kane County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Program is necessary in order to maintain and preserve the natural beauty of Kane County; and

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WHEREAS, adoption of the Kane County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Program will assist in promoting responsible managed growth patterns through intergovernmental planning agreements in conjunction with the Kane County 2020 Land Resource Management Plan, the Kane county Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Kane County 2020 Transportation Plan, and the Kane County Storm water Management Ordinance.

# PACE TOOLKIT



Agriculture Districts

Natural Resource Inventory

Zoning

Local Resolution in Support of  
Agriculture

Maps: Agriculture infrastructure,  
legacy farms, scenic resources,  
prime soil

Land Use Planning

Economic Value of Local Ag

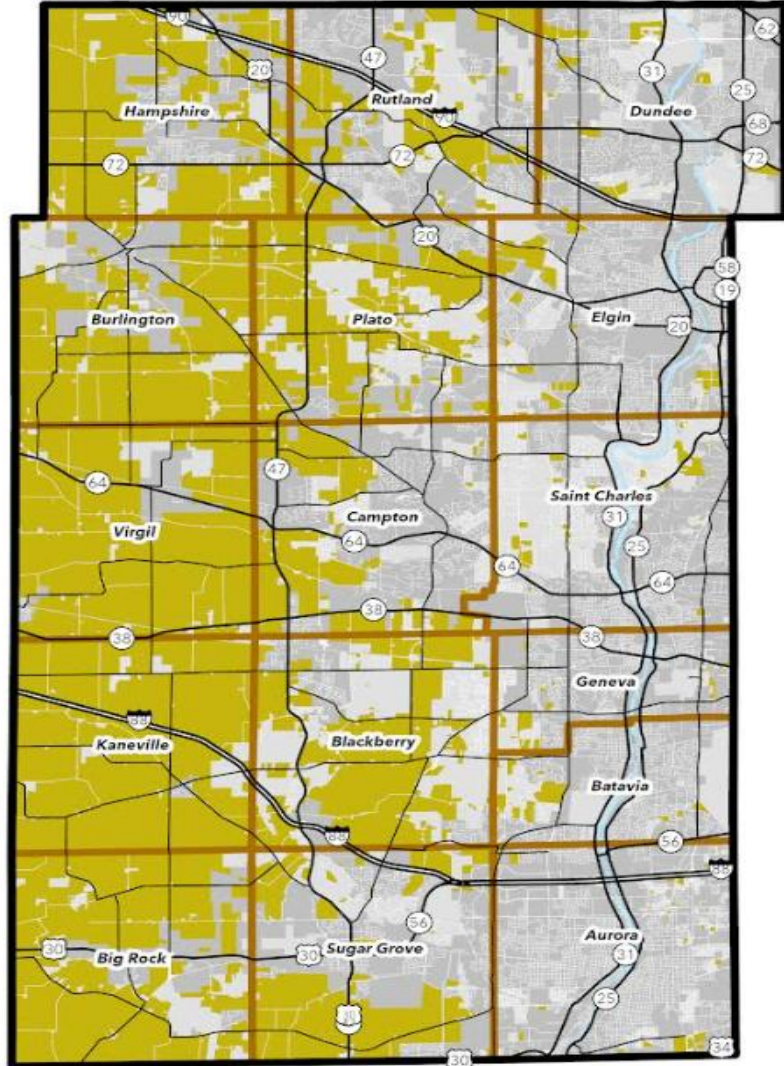
# Use the local government planning process



Existing Land Use

County or Municipal Zoning

Municipal Future Land Use  
County Future Land Use



## Unincorporated Kane County: Ag-Assessed Land

### Legend

Township Boundary

Incorporated Areas

### Unincorporated Areas

Unincorporated Areas with Non-Agricultural Land Uses

Unincorporated Ag-Assessed Land:  
**132,274.9 acres**

Township	Approximate Acreage of Unincorporated Agricultural Land
Kaneville	20,412.7
Virgil	18,932.5
Big Rock	16,391.3
Hampshire	14,659.3
Burlington	14,644.2
Plato	11,094.9
Blackberry	10,612.8
Sugar Grove	8,259.7
Campton	6,405.1
Rutland	6,214.1
Elgin	1,336
Dundee	989.8
St Charles	803
Batavia	652.8
Aurora	479.8



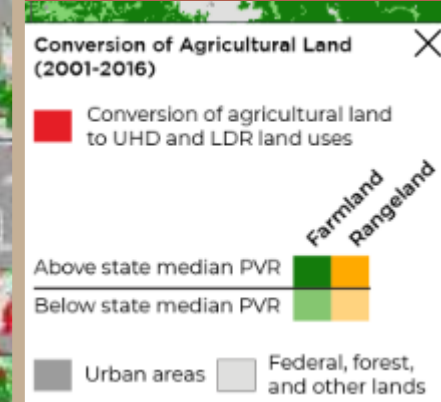
## Resources

- 01 Planning for Agriculture in Virginia Toolkit
- 02 State-level Plans
- 03 Local and Regional Plans
- 04 Comprehensive and Master Plans
- 05 Guides to Planning for Agriculture
- 06 Growing Local: A Community Guide to Planning for Agriculture and Food Systems



Conversion 2001 - 2016 = 20,600 acres  
 Conversion Nationally Significant = 16,800 acres

Permanently protected 2001 - 2016 = ~6,000 acres



Name	Ag Acres Converted	% Ag Land Converted	Cropland Converted	Range Converted	Pasture Converted	Woodland Converted	Nationally Significant Acres C...
Kane, IL	20,600	9.7	18,000	0	1,700	900	16,800



For 90 years, we have helped people make investments in their operations and local communities to keep working lands working, boost rural economies, increase the competitiveness of American agriculture, and improve the quality of our air, water, soil, and habitat.

NRCS's priorities are:

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## 1. Preserve and Protect Agricultural Land

**Goal:** *Reduce the loss of productive farmland and safeguard the long-term viability of America's agricultural landscapes.*

- Expand targeted conservation easement programs to slow the loss of 5,000 acres of farmland per day.
- Partner with local governments and land trusts to prioritize farmland preservation.
- Advocate for policies that incentivize keeping land in agricultural production.
- Promote regenerative practices that strengthen soil health and ensure long-term productivity and profitability.
- Integrate whole farm planning into conservation efforts to provide comprehensive support to farmers.

## 5. Shift to Outcome-Based Conservation and Farmer Empowerment

**Goal:** *Measure success through outcomes and empower farmers with data, recognition, and market access.*

- Move beyond acres and dollars to track real improvements in water management, soil health, and natural vitality.
- Recognize farmers as the heroes of conservation and highlight their accomplishments through data.
- Support precision agriculture and digital farming tools to enhance productivity and profit.
- Help farmers achieve their goals and receive regulatory and marketplace credit for the voluntary work they have accomplished.



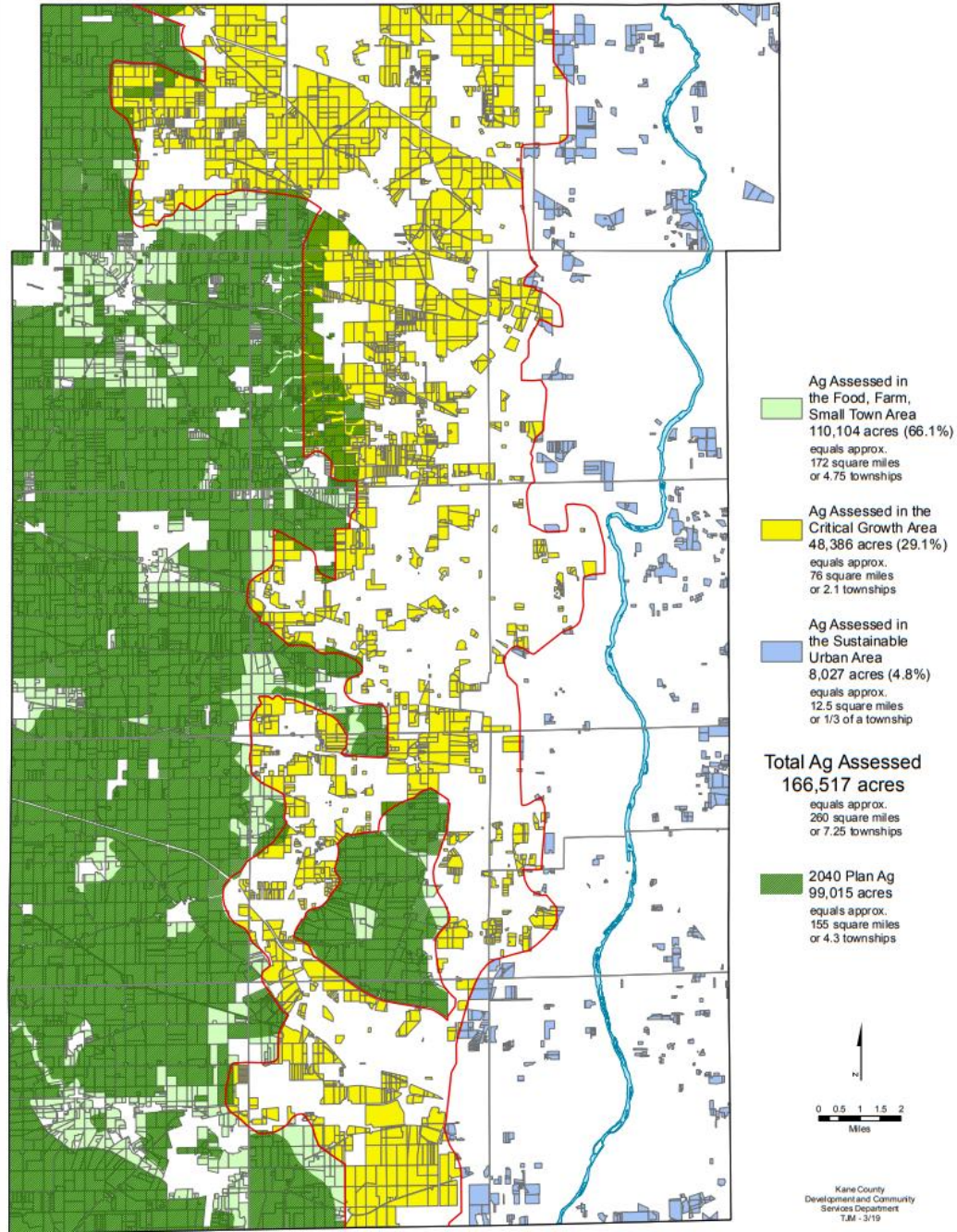
- Contain at least 50% prime, unique, statewide, or locally important farmland
- Contain historical or archeological resources
- Protect grazing uses and related conservation values
- Further a State or local policy consistent with the purposes of the program

When  
using  
NRCS  
matching  
funds

# Eligibility for Parcels for Ag Conservation Easements

NRCS farmland protection programs: ACEP-ALE and RCPP

## Ag Assessed Parcels by 2040 LUS Corridor



## Agriculture parcels everywhere in Kane

Analysis could include:  
Existing land use compared to:

- Size of parcel
- Soil analysis (prime, statewide importance)
- Location to markets
- Distance to farmers markets
- Ag businesses and supporting network
- Ownership
- Zoning
- Proposed future land use
- Current crop
- Cropped by owner or renter
- Utilities nearby
- Nearby protected lands (open or ag)
- Nearby planned protected land
- Historic farms and landmarks
- Centennial farms
- Nearby rustic roads
- Scenic viewsheds
- Water

# ILLINOIS FARMER TAX BENEFIT ACT HB4849 Protects Illinois Farms & Natural Lands

Illinois is paving over the land that feeds us, cleans our water, and anchors our communities. HB4849, sponsored by Representative Guzzardi, creates a common-sense, voluntary state income tax incentive to help farmers and landowners permanently protect working farms and vital natural areas.

## THE CHALLENGE:

**Illinois is paving over open space at an alarming pace**

Farmland loss is accelerating. Illinois paves over 48 acres of farmland every day, and 81% of the land at risk is the most productive and resilient farmland in the country. By 2040, the state is projected to lose 363,400 acres, an area 2.5 times the size of Chicago, resulting in the loss of 1,600 farms, \$218 million in annual farm output, and 3,400 jobs.

Our natural areas are at risk. Just 4% of Illinois' land is protected as open space. Illinois ranks 48th nationally in natural land protection, despite hosting some of the most diverse and ecologically important ecosystems in the United States.

**When land is paved over, Illinois loses clean drinking water, flood protection, wildlife habitat, locally grown food, and a rural way of life that supports both our economy and our identity.**



## THE SOLUTION:

**A State Incentive for Voluntary Land Protection**

The Farmer Tax Benefit Act establishes an Illinois Land Protection State Income Credit, giving landowners a flexible, voluntary option to protect their land for future generations.

Landowners who permanently protect farmland or natural land through a conservation easement or donation of land can receive a state income tax credit.

The credit equals 100% of the value of a donated conservation easement, or 50% of the value of a donated fee simple or remainder interest.

Credits can be carried forward for up to five years or sold to another Illinois taxpayer.

**This approach would help Illinois capture millions in federal match funds that are currently unused while preserving our most vulnerable and valuable natural resources – 15 other states are already doing the same.**



## UNDERSTANDING VOLUNTARY LAND PROTECTION

Voluntary land protection is an essential component of achieving Illinois' climate, economic, and quality of life goals.

Protected lands act as natural filters, **reducing runoff & pollution** and **mitigating floods**. They **clean the water** we drink while supporting the health of our rivers & streams.

Protected lands **capture & store carbon**, helping **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** and contributing to **long-term climate resilience**.

Peri-urban farms, where the most food is grown, are also the most threatened by development. Protecting this land secures **vibrant local food systems**.

Land protection **keeps farmland affordable** for beginning farmers and ensures **future generations will still have places to connect with nature!**

When land is protected from development, landowners can be sure their **investments in soil, water, and ecological health remain** for future generations.

There are some common misconceptions about voluntary land protection, and all of them can be addressed with a bit more information!

✗ MYTH	✓ FACT
Land protection allows the government to take over your property and management decisions.	Conservation easements are voluntary, landowner-led agreements. Landowners and conservation organizations work together to set the terms, and the landowner retains full control over managing the land for their desired objectives.
Land protection does not offer any significant benefits to landowners.	Conservation easements allow landowners to capture the financial value of their development rights and provide assurance that investments in soil & water quality continue to pay dividends.
Easements stop farming or productive land use.	Many easements are specifically designed to keep farmland in production, supporting long-term agricultural viability.
You can not sell or pass on protected land.	Protected land can be sold and inherited like any other private property. There are also estate tax benefits for protected land.
You have to grant the public access to your land under an easement.	Landowners choose who to grant access to their land. Public access is not a requirement for a conservation easement.

### ACT NOW!

**Illinois cannot afford to wait. By passing HB4849, Illinois lawmakers can make a smart, proven investment in Illinois' land, farmers, and our collective future.**

**TOGETHER WE CAN SAVE THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US.**

SIGN THE PETITION



JOIN THE COALITION



WHERE?



## Announcement

# COUNTY OF KANE

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



719 Batavia Avenue  
Geneva, Illinois 60134  
Phone: (630) 232-3560  
Fax: (630) 232-3421  
www.countyofkane.org

## JOB DESCRIPTION

**Job Title:** Farmland Preservation Administrator  
**Department:** Development  
**FLSA Status:** Full Time – Exempt  
**Salary:** \$58,000-\$68,000  
**Bargaining Unit:** No

**General Summary:** The Farmland Preservation Administrator is responsible for direct outreach to farmers and landowners within Kane County and leading the application, contracting, and implementation of Farm Bill Programs including the ACEP-ALE and RCPP programs as well as agriculture initiatives.

<https://www.kanecountyil.gov/Pages/Employment.aspx>