

## THE PROBLEM

Open space, farmland, historic properties, parks, beaches, and trails are key to attracting and retaining residents to our state. They contribute to quality of life, better air and water quality, and are part of the character and charm of Connecticut. Unfortunately, funding for open space acquisition and stewardship is more imperiled than ever.

Connecticut's cities and towns have requested a sustainable source of revenue for local conservation and stewardship efforts that would not impact the municipal mill rate or require additional bonding.

## A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

The Municipal Funding Option is proposed legislation that would allow—but not require—interested towns and cities to establish a dedicated fund to acquire, preserve, and steward open space, water resources, and farmland at the municipal level by enacting a conveyance fee of up to 1% paid by buyers of real property over \$150,000 in value.

This added source of funding would enable communities to fulfill match requirements for state or federal grant programs, cover the costly expenses associated with acquiring land (such as appraisals, surveys, environmental assessments, etc.), repay existing or future municipal bonds used for conservation purposes, and help cover the costs of stewardship of their town's open space properties, water resources and farmland.



Open space and recreation generate \$502 million in state and local tax revenue.



When Eastern Long Island tested a local option for open space, it generated over **\$1.1 billion** and protected more than **10,000 acres**.



The municipal option exempts first-time home buyers and low-income individuals by exempting purchases of \$150,000 or less from the new fee.



## OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Municipal Funding Option would only extend to municipalities that ask to be included. It is not a mandate and not a requirement. Moreover, those municipalities included in the enabling legislation are not obligated in any way to establish the program; it merely gives them the right to consider the funding option if they so choose.

Countless towns and communities have asked for a reliable funding source to acquire open space, preserve farmland, and manage their natural resources. Rather than put an additional burden on an already strained budget, the Municipal Option would give communities an independent source of funds while empowering them to preserve their resources as they see fit.

Nearby states (including MA, NY, RI, PA, and WV) have allowed some municipalities to enact a buyers' conveyance fee, with the income dedicated to conserving and caring for local natural areas. These programs have proven remarkably successful, resulting in the protection of thousands of acres of open space, forests, meadows and farms.

The Municipal Funding Option will provide Connecticut towns with an opportunity to replicate those successes in their own communities.

## MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more or helping to champion this legislation, please contact:

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Learn more about the Municipal Open Space Funding Option at [ctconservation.org/municipal-open-space-funding-option](http://ctconservation.org/municipal-open-space-funding-option)

## CONTACT US

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