



KANE COUNTY

KENYON, Kious, Koppie, Molina, Sanchez, Starrett, Wegman

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2020

County Board Room

Agenda

10:00 AM

Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Bldg. A, Geneva, IL 60134

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of Minutes: May 21, 2020**
3. **Public Comment**
4. **Partners**
 - A. Kane County Farm Bureau Updates (Steve Arnold, Manager)
 - B. Northern Illinois Food Bank Updates (Teresa Schryver, Communications Specialist)
5. **Presentations/Announcements**
 - A. Authorizing the Filing of Kane County's Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant for Farmland Protection (Janice Hill, Executive Planner) (attached)
6. **New Business**
 - A. **Resolution:** Authorizing the Filing of Kane County's Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant for Farmland Protection
7. **Reports Placed On File**
8. **Executive Session (If Needed)**
9. **Adjournment**

Memorandum

June 11, 2020

To: Members of the Agriculture Committee
From: Janice Hill, Executive Planner and Farmland Protection Manager
Re: Application to State of Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant Program

The following categories are required responses in the state’s application to the Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant program. Staff requests approval of an application to the Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant program for matching farmland protection funds.

Background

The State has allocated \$16,500,000 in Rebuild Illinois funds to the competitive Regional Economic Development (RIRED) component. A grant ceiling of \$2,000,000 per project has been established. Grants for less than \$250,000 will not be awarded. The Governor’s Five-Year Economic Development Plan recognizes the importance of regional economic development as a strategy to create sustainable and resilient growth. The objective of this program is to provide grants to strengthen local economies and encourage the development of industry clusters.

Request

Kane County’s Farmland Protection Program authorized by Ordinance 01-67 has permanently protected over 6,000 acres of prime farmland at the edge of Chicago’s metropolitan region since 2002. Agriculture conservation easements insure that land stays permanently in agriculture to grow the crops that produce the food, fiber and fuel that support Illinois residents and businesses. Kane County requests \$ 500,000 of RIRED funding to use as a local match to purchase additional Agricultural Conservation Easements to protect the farm land base. The land will stay in private hands on the tax rolls in perpetuity per the terms of the easement. The cost of the easement will be paid 50% by the federal government through its USDA/NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) which approved the Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Partnership which includes Kane County’s farmland protection program. Over the next three years, RCPP will provide \$ 500,000 to protect Kane County’s farms and if approved the Rebuild Illinois funds will provide the local match.

Linkage to a Regional Economic Development Plan

The Kane County 2040 Plan and its Food and Farm policies are consistent with the FARM Illinois Plan which is the Food and Agriculture Road Map for Illinois released in May 2015 that outlines strategic recommendations that sets the national and international standard for how the food and agriculture system can improve health, contribute to the economy, create jobs, employ new technologies, preserve the environment, adapt to a changing climate, and help under-served communities. The plan is the first

coordinated, system-wide effort to bring together Illinois' food, agriculture, and business networks. Kane County has participated at various points in the process for this plan.

Relationship to Governor's Five-Year Economic Plan

This section of the Plan to Revitalize the Illinois Economy and Build the Workforce of the Future (page 10) is consistent with Kane County's request for funding farmland protection using RIREF funding to match USDA/NRCS RCPP funding.

Agribusiness and Ag Tech: We propose making a range of investments and starting new programs that will facilitate technology adoption for small and mid-sized farms, encourage innovation among farm suppliers and processors of agricultural products, and boost connections with global markets

Actively pursue more funding from the USDA and other federal agencies that provide grants for agriculture research and programming.

Industry Partners that are committed to invest in a project and/or hire employees if the proposal received funding

The federal government USDA/NRCS is the primary industry partner for this project through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. For fiscal year 2019 The Conservation Fund's application entitled Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Partnership was awarded over \$ 8 million in funds to work toward land, water and wildlife conservation measures across Illinois' Mississippi watershed basin. This highly competitive grant includes \$ 500,000 of federal agriculture conservation easement funding for Kane County's farmland protection program of the upcoming 3 years.

Minority Inclusion Plan Strength of applicant's plan to include minority- and women-owned businesses in the project

Application to the Kane County farmland protection program, the only county-based program in Illinois is voluntary. We will promote this program to all farmers including minority and female owned farm owners through announcements in our Growing for Kane newsletter which has a distribution to over 600 farms and agricultural organizations. We will also promote through Kane County Farm Bureau and Kane County Connects newsletter. Much of the work involved in processing agriculture conservation easements is completed in-house by Kane County staff which is led by a minority female who has managed the Kane County's Farmland Protection since inception since 2001. As there are few minorities in conservation across the United States, Janice Hill often provides leadership and training in partnership with major organizations such as American Planning Association, Land Trust Alliance, American Farmland Trust through presentations, trainings on Kane County's farmland protection program and will work with the Chicago Wilderness subcommittee that is working toward diversity and inclusion in conservation.

Amplification of the impact by proximity or connection to other assets

A \$ 500,000 investment by the state of Illinois to Kane County's farmland protection program, along with a federal investment of the same value will protect between 400 and 500 acres of prime farmland (depending on easement cost \$ 2,000 - \$ 2,500 estimate per acre). This acreage will likely be adjacent to other protected farmland and/or essential natural resource areas. Depending on the farm and location, there are likely critical water resources that will be improved through added buffer strips. Each added protected farm insures the likelihood that adjacent farms will continue operations and investments into the future and discourage sale of land for suburban sprawl.

Location on an established footprint

There are several eligible farms that will be submitted for funding under the RCPP and typically there are more farms on the waiting list, than funding available. Although \$ 500,000 in funding has been approved by USDA/NRCS, they will ask for each farm site to be submitted separately and an array of eligibility forms for landowners and operators are required. Kane County will submit an entity application along with an application for each farm.

Utilization of sustainable energy practices

Kane County is one of the first counties in Illinois to offer funding incentives for clean-energy commercial projects. Kane County received the Bronze designation from SolSmart for taking bold steps to encourage solar energy growth and remove obstacles to solar development while providing an implementation tool for the Kane County 2040 Energy Plan, the Kane County 2040 Plan and the Kane County Operational Sustainability Plan. The Kane Energy Efficiency Program (KEEP) program is administered by Inland Green Capital in Oakbrook, Illinois offers an innovative financing tool that provides low-cost, long-term funding for energy efficiency, renewable energy and water conservation projects in commercial properties, including agriculture facilities. Farmers will be advised of this option as part of their whole farm planning when preparing their agriculture conservation easement.



RESOLUTION/ORDINANCE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resolution No.

Authorizing the Filing of Kane County's Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant for Farmland Protection

Committee Flow: Agriculture Committee, Executive Committee, County Board
Contact: Janice Hill, 630.232.3483

Budget Information:

Was this item budgeted? N/A	Appropriation Amount:
If not budgeted, explain funding source:	

Summary:

This resolution authorizes Kane County to file a Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant (RIRED) for its farmland protection program requesting \$ 500,000.00 in funding to use as a local match for federal farmland protection funding received from USDA/NRCS.

STATE OF ILLINOIS

COUNTY OF KANE

RESOLUTION NO.

**AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF KANE COUNTY'S REBUILD ILLINOIS REGIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT FOR FARMLAND PROTECTION**

WHEREAS, Kane County intends to submit an application for Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant (RIRED) for its farmland protection program which permanently protects farmland and currently holds over 6,000 acres of permanent agricultural conservation easements; and

WHEREAS, farmland at the edge of metropolitan areas is being lost at an alarming rate and provides the food, fiber, and fuel necessary for Illinois residents and business and is a key Illinois industry; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held on June 18, 2020 in the County Board room and comments and correspondence were included in the public record and the Agriculture Committee considered this item on its regular agenda on June 18, 2020 and recommended the application be presented to the state; and

WHEREAS, the Kane County application to Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant (RIRED) is consistent with the Governor's Five Year Economic Plan as Agriculture is a key industry for Illinois and Kane County's 2019 economic contribution of \$ 106,000,000 is derived from crops alone; and

WHEREAS, the Kane County Agriculture Committee and County Board have considered all the comments, testimony and written material submitted in connection with the application and is matching \$ 500,000 in RCPP federal funding and is voluntarily matching \$ 300,000 in local funding toward this project over three years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Kane County is requesting \$ 500,000 of Rebuild Illinois Regional Economic Development Grant funds to support the Kane County Farmland Protection program as local match to federal RCPP funds for purchase of permanent agriculture conservation easements to maintain the agriculture land base to produce food, fiber, and fuel for Illinois' residents and businesses consistent with the goals of the Governor's Five Year Economic Plan and authorizes the filing of the application.

Passed by the Kane County Board on July 14, 2020.

John A. Cunningham
Clerk, County Board
Kane County, Illinois

Christopher J. Lauzen
Chairman, County Board
Kane County, Illinois

Vote:

20-07 Rebuild Illinois Grant