



FUNDING

The Jefferson County Commissioners created a special Farmland Protection Fund to carry out the purposes of the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Program.

The Farmland Protection Fund will hold money or property from:

- general or special fund appropriations by the county or state,
- a distribution from the West Virginia Agricultural Land Protection Authority,
- private or governmental grants,
- private contribution,
- fund raising or gifts,
- earnings from investments,
- interest,
- dividends, or
- distributions



The Farmland Protection Fund monies shall not be commingled with other public funds.

All payments or withdrawals of Farmland Protection Funds shall be based upon proper vouchers, invoices or documentation for such disbursements; or shall be a

conservation or preservation easement purchase approved by the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board. All disbursements shall be signed and/or countersigned as directed by the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board.

The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Fund is a special fund managed by the Jefferson County Administrator.

The West Virginia Voluntary Farmland Protection Act authorized the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board to seek out any and all county, state, Federal and private funding available, consistent with the purpose of the Farmland Protection Program, to establish and operate the program. However, the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board is also authorized to decline, reject, or deny private grants, contributions or gifts that represent or have the appearance of representing an impropriety which could result in the temporary or permanent loss of public faith and trustworthiness in the Farmland Protection Program or the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board.

The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board clearly recognizes for this program to succeed at its fullest, funding for the actual compensation for the placement of conservation easements must be secured and this funding level will need to be substantial. However, many of these Federal grant opportunities require some degree of state or local match. To that end, the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board, will evaluate the feasibility of obtaining such local matching funds from several sources.



Examples of those sources include:

1. Governor's Contingency Fund.
2. Legislative Digest Grants.
3. Private foundation gifts or grants.
4. Any future county impact fee(s) dedicated to farmland protection.
5. Any future county transfer tax fee(s) dedicated to farmland protection.

In addition, the West Virginia Voluntary Farmland Protection Act requires the establishment of a state level West Virginia Agriculture Land Protection Authority. This Authority is required to assist the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board in applying for and obtaining all state and federal funding available consistent with the purposes of the farmland protection program.

To accomplish that function, *West Virginia Code §8-24-81(f)* requires the West Virginia Department of Agriculture to include within its budget funding for the Authority for the next fiscal year. The Authority is then

required to distribute within 60 days after the end of its fiscal year at least 80% of that fiscal year's remaining budget to county farmland protection boards that have certified to the Authority that there is pending an application for one or more conservation easements. This state level funding is called the West Virginia Farmland Protection Fund.

This funding, similar to the county farmland protection fund, is authorized by *West Virginia Code §8-24-81(c)* to be comprised of any money made available to the fund by:

- general or special fund appropriations;
- grants or transfers from governmental or private sources;
- money realized by investments, interests, dividends or distributions;
- monies appropriated by the Legislature.

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In addition, the Authority is authorized to seek and apply for all available funds from Federal, state and private sources. ♦