



A Chapter of the American Planning Association

Agriculture Land Preservation Policy

Good farmland, a limited resource, makes up only a small fraction of the nations undeveloped land. As population continues to grow there will be a greater need for the remaining amount of farmland. The Michigan Association of Planning supports state and local programs that protect productive farmland by maintaining the economic viability of agriculture. It is important to provide farmers with voluntary, financially competitive alternatives to selling their land for nonagricultural uses.

1. The Michigan Association of Planning supports legislation that incorporates agricultural land preservation into long range planning consistent with principles of smart growth at the state, county, and municipal levels including the issue of equity.
2. The Michigan Association of Planning supports legislation that sets forth Michigan's policy on agricultural land protection. Such a policy should:
 - . recognize important agricultural land as a valuable natural resource that all levels of government should protect for future generations.
 - . require that state funds for infrastructure facilities, especially for highways and sewer facilities, not be provided unless the Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture find's that the facilities will not be detrimental to the continuation of agriculture in the area.
 - . explicitly authorize county and municipal governments to adopt agricultural zoning ordinances as an appropriate technique for protecting agricultural land wherein agriculture is the recognized long-term use. Such agricultural zones would limit nonagricultural development to densities and development patterns that are consistent with the continuation of agriculture.
 - . explicitly authorize county and municipal governments to adopt and fund purchase of development rights and transfer of development rights programs for the preservation of prime Agricultural land.
3. The Michigan Association of Planning supports re-authorized and increased funding for state and federal grants to state and local governments for the purchase of development rights to agricultural land.
4. The Michigan Association of Planning supports state legislation that links incentives to continue farming (such as state income tax credits, differential assessment for property taxes, and purchase or transfer of development rights) with controls preventing conversion of the recipient's agricultural land to non-farm uses. These controls could range from strict agricultural zoning to permanent easements forbidding non-farm development and should supplement and not replace existing incentive programs that provide temporary protection for farmland.

5. The Michigan Association of Planning supports state legislation that authorizes local governments to levy a tax on the conversion of important agricultural land to non-farm uses in areas designated for agricultural land preservation.
6. The Michigan Association of Planning supports state legislation that requires local comprehensive plans to address the preservation of important agricultural land and to specify programs and techniques for its protection.
7. The Michigan Association of Planning supports state funding for ongoing agricultural land Michigan Association of Planning and monitoring programs such as MIRIS, LISA, GIS and a statewide land classification system in order to document the amount of land in farm production and the rate at which it is being converted to non-farm uses.
8. The Michigan Association of Planning supports federal and state farm policies that maintain the economic viability of agriculture through value added products or industries which use materials from agriculture, as a means of protecting agricultural land usage.