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FRPP - IFR - ROGERS

Received 9/20/06  
RJR

September 12, 2006

Mr. Tim Rogers  
1924 Quaker Road  
Macedon, NY 14502

Robert Glennon, Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Manager  
Easement Program Division  
USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)  
1400 Independence Ave, SW Rm 6819-S  
Washington, DC 20250-1400

Dear Mr. Glennon:

I am writing in response to the Interim Final Rule published on July 27, 2006 for the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP). FRPP has been an important partner to our local efforts to protect farmland and support our local farmers. My father and I have protected over 500 acres of land in the Town of Macedon that used both FRPP and the New York State Farmland Protection Program funds. I am considering applying again to each program for some other land that I am trying to buy.

I am very concerned that FRPP policies proposed in the Interim Final Rule conflict with the standards of the New York State Farmland Protection Program. This year, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets indicated that FRPP funds would not be permitted as a match for state-funded projects – most notably due to new FRPP impervious surface standards. If this conflict continues, I will not apply to either program since as a young farmer, I do not have the equity to donate a large amount to help the town, state and federal government achieve their farmland protection goals.

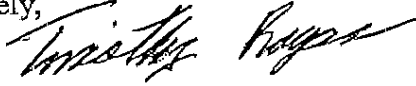
Please note the following issues:

- I would encourage the NRCS to retain the right of third party enforcement, with reporting criteria for the local municipality or land trust, federal interests would be protected, rather than to being a co-grantee. This new standard will add unnecessary costs to projects.
- I believe that the 2% impervious surface restriction is not the right way to protect topsoil. Farmers need good soil and will adopt management techniques that preserve topsoil. Our easement requires a conservation plan for the highly erodible soils, why wouldn't this work for the rest of the soils? This is a more flexible way to manage topsoil without restricting management practices with inflexible restrictions in an easement.

I believe farming is a good way of life and will continue to be. I do not do things today the same way my father did when he started 45 years ago nor the way my grandfather did 60 years ago. It is critical that any farmland protection easement allow future managers to have the ability to adopt new farming methods and production practices as they come along.

I hope you will consider these concerns and make appropriate changes in order that more farmers, myself included, can utilize your program.

Sincerely,



- CC: U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton
- U.S. Senator Charles Schumer
- U.S. Congressman James Walsh
- Ron Alvarado, NRCS-NY State Conservationist
- Marilyn Stephenson, NRCS-NY FRPP Program Manager
- Patrick Brennan, Commissioner NYSDAM
- David Haight, American Farmland Trust