

House Republican Press Release

June 28, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

REP. CHAPIN: FARMLAND PRESERVATION LEGISLATION SIGNED INTO LAW



HARTFORD – On Wednesday, June 27, Governor M. Jodi Rell signed legislation into law cosponsored by State Rep. Clark Chapin, R-New Milford, that will create a state advisory board to promote farmland preservation. Public Act 07-162 creates the Farmland Advisory Board within the Department of Agriculture (DOA). As Ranking Member (House Republican Leader) of the

Legislature’s Environment Committee, Rep. Chapin was instrumental in moving the legislation through the committee process.

The 12-member board will assist DOA with the purchase of development rights program and other efforts to preserve agricultural lands. The new law establishes the board's composition and duties. It also requires the State Bond Commission to vote on the issuance of bonds that the Legislature approved for agricultural land preservation programs but have not yet been allocated.

The state's purchase of development rights or Farmland Preservation Program is its primary farmland preservation tool. Farmers may apply to the program through DOAG, which evaluates applications according to criteria set in state regulation. Preserving farmland that contains a high percentage of prime farmland soils in established farm communities is the program's primary goal. The new Farmland Preservation Advisory Board will be charged with evaluating and providing comments and recommendations on the purchase of development rights and may recommend other changes to the program.

“Our open space program has functioned well in a similar fashion,” said Rep. Chapin. “Through the creation of an advisory committee to facilitate the purchasing of development rights, we have the opportunity to do an even better job in preserving farmland. The issuance of bond money in a lump-sum, also eliminates the need for each individual property to be placed on a Bond Commission agenda.”