



Agriculture
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AGRICULTURE NEWS

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For Immediate Release: January 11, 2019

**AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCES \$5 MILLION IN FUNDING
AVAILABLE FOR SOURCE WATER BUFFER PROGRAM**

***Funds Promote Water Quality Through the Long-Term Protection of Riparian
Buffer Systems***

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball announced today that \$5 million is available through the State's Source Water Buffer Program for the purchase of conservation easements to protect riparian buffer systems on farmland that borders critical water resources.

Riparian buffer systems are areas of land containing a variety of vegetation between agricultural lands and water sources. They are designed to filter potential pollutants in surface runoff or shallow groundwater to protect water quality of New York State's aquifers, watersheds, reservoirs, lakes, rivers, and streams.

"Our farmland owners are national leaders in land stewardship and this program rewards those whose projects protect drinking water by permanently protecting areas of their farms that buffer drinking water systems," **Commissioner Ball said.** "We thank the Governor and the Legislature for providing this funding under the Clean Water Infrastructure Act."

Funds for the Source Water Buffer Program are part of the New York State Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017.

Applications for funding will be accepted from Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or a group of Districts partnering in a single application. The Soil and Water Conservation Districts may partner with municipalities or other not-for-profit conservation land organizations (land trusts) for the purposes of holding the conservation easement. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and until funds are exhausted.

The State will provide a maximum of 75% of the total eligible costs for the project, as long as a minimum 25% of the total eligible costs is contributed by the landowner, operator or project sponsor.

Funds can be used to cover costs related to purchasing development rights, title transactions, property surveys, among others. For a complete listing, please visit (<https://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>). Eligible projects will be awarded by January 2020.

Dale Stein, Chair of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee said, "Our County Soil and Water Conservation Districts have a long history working with farms and local partners to conserve and protect our State's natural resources. This funding will further those efforts while also rewarding farmers for their stewardship of our precious water resources."

Requirements, guidelines and eligibility criteria can be found [here](#).

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