

§6203-C. Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Fund

1. Fund established. The Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established and is administered by the board in cooperation with the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry under the provisions of this chapter and Title 7, section 164. The fund consists of the proceeds from the sale of bonds authorized for the purposes set forth in subsection 3 and funds received as contributions from private and public sources for those purposes. The fund must be held separate and apart from all other money, funds and accounts, except that eligible investment earnings credited to the assets of the fund become part of the assets of the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year must be carried forward for the next fiscal year.

[PL 2023, c. 284, §7 (AMD).]

2. Grants. The board may make grants to state agencies and cooperating entities for the purposes identified in subsection 3. Grants are made according to rules adopted by the board. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2025, c. 471, Pt. A, §5 (AMD).]

3. Fund proceeds. The proceeds of the fund may be applied and expended to acquire property or interests in property that are designed to protect access to working farmland. The board shall include as a condition of an acquisition or grant made under this section the requirement that the protected property may not be used, altered or developed in a manner that precludes its availability for commercial production of agricultural products.

[PL 2021, c. 135, §4 (NEW).]

4. Matching funds. For each grant made under this section, the board shall require the applicant or the grant recipient to provide matching funds at least equal to the amount of the grant.

[PL 2021, c. 135, §4 (NEW).]

5. Uses of the fund. When an interest in land or an interest in working farmland is acquired with proceeds from the fund, the board may fund minor capital investments in the stewardship of that land. Funds for stewardship investments must be held in a dedicated stewardship endowment and identified for use on the funded property. The stewardship investments may not exceed 5% of the appraised value of the acquired property.

A. When an interest in land is acquired with proceeds from the fund, the board may fund minor capital improvements on the land and on adjoining lands in the same ownership or under the same management to improve public access, as long as these improvements do not exceed 5% of the appraised value of the acquired property. [PL 2021, c. 135, §4 (NEW).]

B. When an interest in working farmland is acquired with proceeds from the fund, the board may fund the development of a business plan and capital improvements to provide for the land's continuing use as working farmland, as long as these improvements do not exceed 5% of the appraised value of the acquired property. Capital improvements under this paragraph may also be made on adjoining farmland in the same ownership or under the same management. [PL 2021, c. 135, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 135, §4 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2021, c. 135, §4 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 284, §7 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 471, Pt. A, §5 (AMD).

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