



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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NEWS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NEW ESTIMATES SHOW SUCCESS OF LOCAL LAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN CONNECTICUT**



*Preserved Land and Farmland are the focus of the CEQ's  
"Indicator of the Month" for November*

HARTFORD – Connecticut's effort to preserve land has been going better than anyone in state government realized. This was the conclusion of the Council on Environmental Quality when it examined the new data for preserved land at its most recent meeting.

In a November 4, 2009 letter to Governor M. Jodi Rell, Council Chair Barbara C. Wagner reported that "previous estimates of open space acreage preserved by municipalities and nonprofit organizations have been low, probably by tens of thousands of acres."

Wagner credited the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for its Protected Open Space Mapping (POSM) project which, in October, published new preserved land data for about half of the towns and cities in the state.

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“It was very encouraging to learn that Connecticut’s citizens have preserved more land than anyone knew about. This unexpected knowledge leads the Council to suggest some immediate steps to take advantage of this success and improve land conservation strategy in coming years,” Wagner said in the letter.

“To find out when we can reach the state’s goals for land conservation and how much it will cost, we first need to know where we stand,” Wagner concluded. “We have written to Governor Rell to recommend rapid completion of POSM for the remaining half of Connecticut’s towns as a foundation for charting the state’s next steps toward its goals. Also, we are hopeful that similar data can be collected for farmland, because numerous towns have preserved farmland on their own and yet the state does not know how many acres are involved.”

The Council on Environmental Quality also suggested that one agency be charged to create a low-cost, electronic reporting system whereby municipalities and nonprofit organizations would report each new land acquisition.

“In the Council’s view, this need not be a mandate to towns and cities; we are confident that the great majority of local governments and nonprofits will participate voluntarily and eagerly,” said Wagner.

The Council also recommended that the new data be used to drive a new land acquisition and strategy.

For more information, look for the Featured Indicators for November on the Council’s home page at [www.ct.gov/ceq](http://www.ct.gov/ceq).

The Council is a nine-member board that is independent of the DEP except for purely administrative functions. Established in 1971 alongside the DEP, the CEQ has published dozens of reports on state environmental problems and solutions – including Environmental Quality in Connecticut, the official annual state report on the condition of Connecticut’s environment – and has resolved hundreds of citizen complaints. The Council monitors and reports on important state actions that affect the environment, and, pursuant to state law, advises other state agencies on projects and policies.

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