

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009**

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SENATE BILL 847

Short Title: Funds for Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Albertson; Atwater, Purcell, and Weinstein.

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget.

March 25, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION.

Whereas, North Carolina's 52,913 farms provide food, fiber, economic activity, wildlife habitat, natural resource protection, open space, and cultural heritage to North Carolinians; and

Whereas, farms improve the quality of life for all North Carolinians while requiring little or no public services or infrastructure; and

Whereas, agriculture and agribusiness are North Carolina's leading industry, generating nearly \$71,000,000,000 for the economy and employing one in five members of our workforce; and

Whereas, a productive and stable agricultural sector is important to farm families, rural communities, local economies, and North Carolina's economic recovery; and

Whereas, landowners are looking for a wider range of options to help them develop sustainable and profitable farms and pass them along to future generations; and

Whereas, North Carolina now has 67 voluntary agriculture districts that support farmland preservation; and

Whereas, numerous State and local organizations have passed resolutions to support the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and nearly one-quarter of all counties have passed or are currently considering county farmland protection plans; and

Whereas, funds appropriated to the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund have been leveraged with funds from federal and local sources to preserve agricultural land valued in excess of \$55,000,000 since 2005; and

Whereas, funds appropriated to the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund have been used to expand and build the agricultural processing facilities that will benefit small family farms; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Agriculture conducts an agricultural census every five years, and the results of the 2007 census reveal a continuing significant loss of 600,000 acres in farmland in the State down to 8.5 million acres, compared with 9.1 million acres in 2002; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund under G.S. 106-744 the sum of four million dollars (\$4,000,000) for the 2009-2010 fiscal year to be used for the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements or for the preservation of farmland as provided in Article 61 of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.

