

# WI Land + Water: Gov. Evers signs Farmland Preservation legislation into law, supporting farmers and sustainable practices

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**Madison, WI** – WI Land+Water celebrates Governor Tony Evers officially signing into law [2023 Wisconsin Act 42](#) (formerly Assembly Bill 133), enacting significant improvements for Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation (FP) Program. The bipartisan legislation has been a top priority for WI Land+Water for several legislative sessions, and stands as a testament to collaborative efforts and aims to enhance and modernize the existing program.

“The Farmland Preservation Program is unique, as it is the only program in Wisconsin that provides incentives for farmers to maintain working lands in exchange for meeting conservation standards,” said Matt Krueger, Executive Director of WI Land+Water. “It’s a win-win for soil health and water quality, and these improvements will only make this important program better.”

“We are grateful to Gov. Evers, as well as the offices of Rep. Oldenburg, Sen. Testin, and Sen. Spreitzer who were instrumental in getting Act 42 across the finish line,” noted Krueger. “Our agricultural and conservation group partners were also important in championing this sensible piece of legislation.”

County land and water conservation department staff play a key role in the FP Program, working to support farmers in meeting the required conservation standards, and verifying their eligibility for the tax credit. WI Land+Water sees opportunity to further improve the FP Program in the future by providing counties with support for their work in implementing the FP Program.

## Key Highlights of 2023 Wisconsin Act 42:

- Effective 2023, increases and simplifies FP Program tax credits, which have not been adjusted for a decade. Consolidating and increasing the three incentive tiers of \$5, \$7.50, and \$10 per acre, to two tiers of \$10 and \$12.50 per acre will modernize the program, potentially leading to greater landowner participation.
- Adds agricultural conservation easements in a farmland preservation area as a new \$10/acre category of farmland that qualifies for the FP Program tax credit.
- Demonstrates responsiveness to Wisconsin taxpayer concerns. The FP Program changes in 2023 Wisconsin Act 42 remove barriers to participation that were previously indicated in landowner surveys.
- Protects more Wisconsin farmland, which is rapidly declining. From 1950-2000, farmland acreage declined by nearly one-third. Additionally, the FP Program requires that enrolled acres meet agricultural conservation standards, which provides greater protection of soil and water resources.
- Decreases FP Program agreement length from 15 to 10 years.

**WI Land+Water** is a nonprofit organization that supports the local and statewide efforts of all county land and water conservation department staff and land conservation committee supervisors across Wisconsin. Our members work directly with landowners, farmers, and citizens to improve land and water management. This boots-on-the-ground approach provides all Wisconsinites with direct access to technical assistance and professional expertise. Learn more at [www.wisconsinlandwater.org](http://www.wisconsinlandwater.org).