

Funding Available for Ag Land Conservation

Cap-and-Trade Funded SALC Program Offers Grants to Protect Agricultural Land from Development, Lower Emissions

SACRAMENTO – The Strategic Growth Council (SGC) has approved grant guidelines and is seeking applications for projects that protect agricultural land and reduce greenhouse gases. Cities, counties, land trusts, and other governmental and non-profit entities are invited to apply for funding that will help California limit sprawl, strengthen the agricultural economy, and meet its carbon reduction goals through easements and plans that protect agricultural lands.

Grants are made available through California's [Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation \(SALC\) Program](#) and are funded through a portion of cap-and-trade auction proceeds dedicated to greenhouse gas reduction. The amount available for fiscal year 2018-2019 has yet to be determined but totaled nearly \$48 million last year. Two types of projects are eligible for grant funding: agricultural conservation easement acquisition projects and planning projects.

Pre-proposals, or concept proposals, for easement projects must be submitted by Wednesday, April 17, 2019. Applicants interested in applying for planning grants are encouraged to submit pre-proposals as well. Complete applications for both easement and planning grants are due September 13, 2019.

“The SGC is pleased to launch the fifth round of this critical program, which reduces harmful greenhouse gas emissions while also supporting local farms and farmers around the state,” SGC Executive Director Louise Bedsworth said.

The [Department of Conservation](#) (DOC) administers the program on behalf of the SGC and leads SALC Program implementation through guidelines development and coordination of the interagency team that reviews proposals and develops recommendations for funding. After grants are awarded, DOC works with applicants to successfully complete projects protecting California's valuable agricultural resources.

“The Department of Conservation has teamed up with the SGC, land trusts, and landowners to conserve thousands of acres of farmland to ensure food security and cleaner air in the future,” Department of Conservation Director David Bunn said.

The SALC Program contributes to the State of California's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by protecting agricultural lands and supporting compact development and low-emission transportation alternatives such as public transit and bike lanes. This initiative prioritizes funding for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Launched by the SGC in 2015, the SALC Program has awarded \$123.9 million to agricultural conservation easements and planning grants in its first four years. These grants conserve 60 properties in 31 counties, protecting nearly 91,000 acres of agricultural land in perpetuity, and support development of eight regional strategies to conserve agricultural land.

Among the properties that will be protected from development are a 1,081-acre cattle ranch and honey bee operation near Redding in Shasta County. Properties already protected by SALC include 314 acres of a ranch near Placerville, completing the conservation of a 937-acre cattle ranch that has been in operation since 1859, and a 536-acre farm located in Monterey County.

For additional information or for grant application materials, please contact the SALC Program at : (916) 324-0850. Or <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/grant-programs/SALCP/Pages/Application%20Information.aspx>

Contact: Don Drysdale; (916) 323-1886; pao@conservation.ca.gov