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FRPP - IFR - TOMPKINS

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TOMPKINS COUNTY
AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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September 21, 2006

State Conservationist Ron Alvarado
USDA NRCS
The Galleries of Syracuse
441 South Salina Street, Suite 354
Syracuse NY 13020-2450

Dear State Conservationist Alvarado:

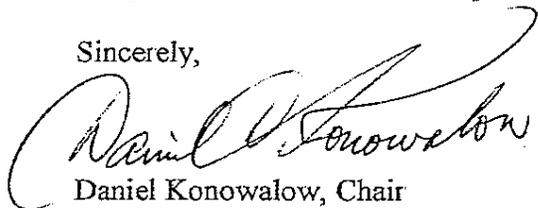
The Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board wishes to comment about the important programs you oversee for permanently protecting farmland from development. New York's Farmland Protection Program and NRCS' Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) are important complements to local efforts to conserve natural resources, support farm viability and keep land available for future generations of farmers. These programs have played important roles in projects in many parts of New York - from Long Island to the North Country to Western New York. In many cases, particularly areas without local farmland protection funding, these programs have worked in concert to provide farmers with a financially competitive alternative to selling their farms for development.

The conflict that currently exists between these two programs regarding impervious surfaces and other programmatic standards cause us great concern. For some state funded programs, FRPP funds are the only matching funds available except for a farmer bargain sale. Similarly, the state program offers an important match to FRPP funds.

To maximize the effectiveness of limited funding, state and federal funds must be able to be used together on farmland protection projects in New York. The inability to match state and federal funds will result in fewer farms being protected and diminish the effectiveness of both programs.

We urge you to work with New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Patrick Brennan to do what is necessary to overcome these differences and insure compatibility between these important programs. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Daniel Konowalow, Chair
Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board