

**AUTHORIZING A PURCHASE OF AN AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT
FOR AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST BUY-SELL-PROTECT PROGRAM**

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a national nonprofit that protects farmland by promoting sound farming practices and keeping farmers on the land. AFT has launched a Buy-Protect-Sell program to facilitate the transfer of affordable farmland to emerging farmers. Under this program, AFT purchases farmland, permanently protects that land with an Agricultural Conservation Easement (ACE) and then sells the land to a new farmer at a more affordable price due to the ACE. The ACE includes affordability provisions to protect the future availability of the farm, requires agricultural practice management planning and encourages regenerative farming practices.

AFT, in partnership with Groundswell Conservancy, has worked with Erica Makar to purchase 21 acres in the Town of Verona. The appraised value of the Makar property is \$1,069,300 and the appraised value of the property subject to the ACE restrictions is \$299,300, which is the farmer's purchase price. Ms. Makar has agreed to a bargain sale price of \$550,250 to AFT. The difference between the bargain sale price of \$550,250 and the farmer's purchase price of \$299,300 is \$250,950. AFT has asked the County to be a partner in protecting the land by purchasing the ACE for a bargain sale price of \$250,950 (appraised value of the ACE is \$770,000).

Dane County Land & Water Resources Department recommends partnering with AFT and Groundswell Conservancy in the first Buy-Protect-Sell program transaction in Dane County and the purchase of an ACE from AFT for \$250,950 and associated transaction costs up to \$5800.

Funds for the purchase are available in the 2025 Dane County Conservation Fund budget. The debt issued to support this expenditure will have a term of 20 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors and the Dane County Executive hereby authorize the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement as described above for \$250,950 plus associated transaction costs according to Wis. Stats. Chapter 27.03(3); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Dane County Land & Water Resources Department Director and the Real Estate Coordinator are authorized to administer the closing and the transfer of the above-mentioned conservation easement to Dane County, and the Controller is authorized to issue checks necessary to effectuate the transaction.