**30% Land Group**

**Farmland SubGroup**

**DRAFT Recommendations**

**Feb 23, 2024**

1. **Double the amount of permanently protected farmland in Maine by 2030 (From 3.8% to 7%) by allocating a minimum of $100M in state resources towards farmland conservation.**

To sufficiently safeguard this essential natural resource, farmland protection efforts will require a new dedicated funding stream or a significantly higher allocation within both new and existing conservation funding streams. A minimum of $100M of state funding should be directed towards farmland protection programs through 2030.

1. **Ensure there is a well-funded, sufficiently-staffed, stand-alone state program or mechanism to prioritize the expeditious and efficient flow of farmland conservation resources in collaboration with non-profit and federal partners.**

A new Farmland Protection mechanism should be designed explicitly to harmonize with philanthropic and private funding sources, as well as federal funding streams, to maximize the value of this effort. The program should also be designed to seamlessly support alternative methods of protecting farmland outside of the traditional easement acquisition process (Buy/Protect/Support/Sell, community land trust/non-profit acquisitions, etc.).

1. **Commission a Maine Farmland Action Plan to articulate goals and strategies regarding Maine’s farmland resource and agricultural economy beyond 2030.**

A visionary Farmland Action Plan should prioritize identifying the highest priority lands to secure against nonagricultural development along with affordable and achievable pathways to farmland access, development of effective tools and programs for supporting Maine’s agricultural economy through land protection, and integration of other State goals and objectives of building a diverse and resilient food system, with the intent of achieving no net loss of farmland in Maine.

1. **Expand funding for state programming and infrastructure that has a tangible, positive impact on farm viability in Maine.**

Recognizing that farmland is most productive and valuable when farm businesses are thriving, invest in and fully fund and promote existing grant, loan, and assistance programs currently available to Maine farmers and food businesses.