



NEWS

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Agriculture Secretary Announces Availability of TDR Planning Assistance Grants

The State Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Bank is making available 50 percent cost-share grants of up to \$40,000 to help municipalities conduct the planning necessary to implement successful transfer of development rights programs, Agriculture Secretary Charles M. Kuperus announced today.

“TDR is an important tool that enables municipalities to plan for growth while protecting their most important agricultural and natural resources,” said Secretary Kuperus, who chairs the State TDR Bank Board. “These grants will provide towns with financial assistance in preparing TDR ordinances and carrying out the planning required to establish effective TDR programs.”

“Secretary Kuperus and I are eager to work with municipalities and counties to put TDR into action,” said Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Susan Bass Levin. “TDR programs promote Smart Growth across our state, by channeling development to the areas where it makes sense and preserving our precious open space.”

In March, Governor James E. McGreevey signed into law the State Transfer of Development Rights Act, authorizing municipalities statewide to enact TDR ordinances. The law authorizes the State TDR Bank Board to provide municipalities with planning assistance grants to assist in the process.

To be eligible for a grant, a municipality must have an updated master plan that includes a conservation element, as well as an advisory committee to oversee preservation. TDR ordinances must be reviewed and certified as viable by the State TDR Bank. Three-quarters of the grant funds will be provided to municipalities prior to certification, with the remaining 25 percent disbursed after the TDR ordinance is certified.

Priority for awarding grants will be given to regional planning, consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, local commitment to preservation, and the viability of the proposed sending and receiving areas.

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TDR programs are designed to encourage a shift in growth away from a municipality's critical resource areas (agricultural, environmentally sensitive, open space or historic) to areas that can accommodate the growth. Landowners in areas where land use is restricted are able to sell their development rights -- or development credits. Purchasers of these credits may use them to build elsewhere in a designated growth area at a higher density than normally allowed in a town's zoning ordinance. Prior to the TDR law signed earlier this year, only municipalities in Burlington County could enact TDR ordinances.

A total of up to \$1.5 million is available for the grants program. Applications for planning assistance grants will be accepted and awarded on a rolling basis, depending on funding availability. For an application or more information, contact the State TDR Bank Board at (609) 984-2504.

The TDR Bank provides financial and other assistance to landowners and municipalities that enact TDR ordinances. The bank is an in-but-not-of agency of the State Agriculture Development Committee, which administers the state Farmland Preservation Program.

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