

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §8a-12-15

§8A-12-15. Criteria for acquisition of conservation and preservation easements by county farmland protection boards and the authority.

The authority and county farmland protection boards, in ranking applications for conservation and preservation easements, shall consider the following factors as priorities:

- (a) The imminence of residential, commercial or industrial development;
- (b) The total acreage offered for conservation or preservation easement;
- (c) The presence of prime farmland, unique farmland, farmland of statewide importance, other locally significant farmlands and the productive capacity of the acreage;
- (d) Whether the property offered is contiguous or appurtenant to working farms;
- (e) The ratio of the asking price, if any, of the easement to the fair market value of the easement;
- (f) The historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, recreational, natural, scenic, source water protection or unique value of the easement: Provided, That determinations of the authority or a county farmland protection board are not a substitute for and do not have the effect of other procedures under state or federal law for granting protected status to land, including, but not limited to, procedures under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, or rules of the director of the historic preservation section of the Division of Culture and History authorized in section eight, article one, chapter twenty-nine of this code, or procedures under the authority of the tourism commissioner or the parks and recreation section of the Division of Natural Resources;
- (g) The existence and amount of secured debt upon the property, as determined by a title search, and whether the total exceeds the agricultural value of the land as determined by the appraisal as required in subsection (d), section fourteen of this article; and
- (h) The length of the protective easement.