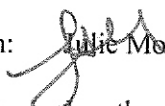



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MEMO

To: Joint Fiscal Committee
From:  Julie Moore, Director, Clean & Clear Program
Thru: Jonathan Wood, Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources 
Date: September 2, 2009
Subject: Status Report on FY10 Appropriation to Farmers' Watershed Alliance

Sec. E.700.2(a) of the FY2010 budget required that:

The secretary of natural resources shall allocate and grant \$125,000 of the funds appropriated to the agency for the Clean and Clear program to the Franklin County watershed alliance. The secretary shall report to the joint fiscal committee by September 15, 2009 regarding how this grant was allocated within the agency Clean and Clear budget.

In fulfilling this requirement, I met with several members of the Farmers' Watershed Alliance (FWA) in early-June to discuss potential project ideas. Among the ideas discussed were the purchase of equipment to facilitate low-till and/or no-till cropping systems and establishing a grant program to provide financial support for the design and construction of animal mortality composting facilities. FWA indicated that the latter was of particular importance as the rendering facility in Ellensburg (NY) had recently stopped serving farmers in northern Vermont, and many farmers were without a viable alternative for disposing of their mortalities.

FWA met later in the month and as a group decided that they would like to pursue a grant program for animal mortality composting with the allocation of funds. Given the nature of the project, and based on subsequent conversations with Senator Bartlett and Finance Commissioner Reardon, the grant is being funded with a portion of the Agency's capital appropriation for the Clean & Clear program. It was agreed that shifting this grant to capital funding met the legislative intent of making additional resources available to FWA, without having significant adverse effects on Clean & Clear's staff and operating budgets.

A follow-on meeting has been scheduled on September 8th with FWA to discuss specific elements of the grant program; it is expected that grants will become available to farmers later this fall.