August 22, 2011

Secretary Ben Brancel
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection
2811 Agriculture Drive
PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708-8911

Re: Recertification of Dane County Farmland Preservation Plan

Dear Secretary Brancel:

I write as the President of the Dane County Towns Association. We request that the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection extend the deadline for recertification of Dane County’s Farmland Preservation Plan (the "Plan") from December 31, 2011 to December 31, 2012. Our request is made at the request at the direction of a unanimous vote of our assembled members at our membership meeting on Wednesday, August 17, 2011. We also think it is good public policy.

The Dane County Plan needs to be recertified in response to changes in the Program adopted by the Legislature. Some of these changes have major implications for the towns and the County. Dane County is a large county with substantial growth pressures affecting farmland. Farmers have concerns about their ability to continuing farming and the role of the farmland Program in facilitating that. Towns are concerned about the implications of the new statues for their future land use plans.

Because of the December 31, 2011, deadline the process of developing a revised plan has been quite rushed. The issues involved in this are quite serious and affect many thousands of individuals and a large amount of property. We simply think more time needs to be given for a thoughtful discussion of this matter.
Accordingly, we request that you issue an appropriate directive delaying the deadline for revision of the Plan to December 31, 2012.

Very truly yours,

Jerry Derr
Gerald H. Derr
President

Cc: Dane County Farm Bureau
    Dane County Executive Joseph Parisi
    Dane County Board Chairman, McDonell
    Patrick Miles, Zoning and Land Regulation Committee
    Brian Standing, County Department of Planning and Development
    Dane County Communities

Drafted by DCTA staff and reviewed by Jerry Derr, based on August 17, 2011 membership vote.