

THE PROBLEM

Enacted with tremendous bipartisan support in 2005, the Community Investment Act (CIA) provides a dedicated and consistent source of funding for state preservation of open space, farmland, and historic sites. Funds are also used to develop affordable housing, provide a safety net for the state's dairy industry, and make important municipal improvements.

The CIA has leveraged millions in private and public dollars, all while creating jobs and preserving and reinvesting in Connecticut's rich character. Despite its success, the CIA fund is consistently targeted to close budget gaps. Due to years of cuts and diversions, agencies have been forced to work with reduced funds, resulting in a growing list of unfunded needs and projects across the state.

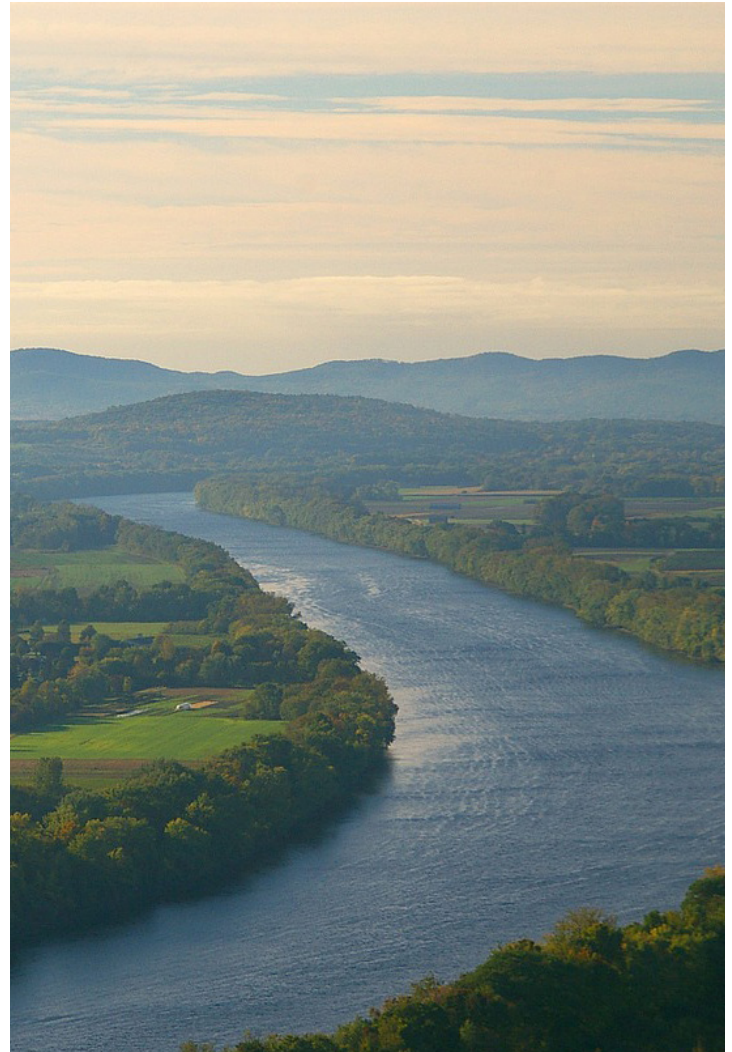
In 2015, the legislature passed a measure to divert 50% of recording fee revenue from CIA accounts. In 2016, the final budget agreement swept unallocated funds from CIA account to remedy general revenue shortfalls. In 2017, full funding was restored, but the CIA then suffered a \$5 million cut as part of deficit mitigation adjustments. While the 2018 state budget adjustments did not include additional cuts, 2019 brought a proposal to transfer the CIA into the general fund, which would have ended the program as we know it. Although that proposal was rejected, the CIA did suffer a diversion of \$1.5 million, impacting programs to support open space, farmland, historic preservation and affordable housing.

A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

The CIA account needs to be protected as a dedicated fund and must not be raided to plug budget shortfalls or fund other programs. Our communities rely on these funds to preserve their environmental and cultural heritage, enhance their quality of life, and strengthen local economies.

Advocates urge lawmakers to work with town leaders to highlight the CIA investments made within their own communities.

Though the general assembly must make difficult decisions to balance the state budget, the CIA has already paid a steep price these past several years.



FAST FACTS

- Through a \$40 surcharge on local land recording, the CIA has funded over **1,400 projects** with **\$152 million** invested, benefiting almost every community in Connecticut.
- Continuous sweeps of the CIA fund undermine Connecticut's statutory goal of conserving **21%** of the state's lands by 2023.
- The CIA generates roughly **\$22 million** annually, with funds supporting land conservation, farmland preservation and dairy, affordable housing development, and the revitalization of historic buildings.

A ROARING SUCCESS

The Community Investment Act is the only consistent source of funding for Connecticut's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA) – the state's matching grant program for land trusts, municipalities, and water companies seeking to conserve open space. The CIA is the exclusive source of funding for the Urban Green and Community Garden Grant Program under OSWA.

Investment in open space is proven to add immeasurably to the quality of life of Connecticut residents while also enhancing local property values.

If sweeps of the CIA account are allowed to continue, it will undermine the administration, function, and viability of the OSWA program, dealing a serious blow to the land conservation community's ability to protect open space and farmland, which are essential to the state's efforts in mitigating the impacts of climate change.



MORE INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning more about the Community Investment Act or seeing how the program has benefitted your community, please contact:

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You can also visit the CIA website for more information, including a list of CIA projects in your community:
CommunityInvestmentAct.org