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Old Saybrook, Portland, Westbrook

Date: February 15, 2013

To: LCRVCOG Board members

From: Janice Ehlemeyer

At the COG meeting on Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, Chairman Iino has asked for a presentation from the existing regional group who are looking into a Regional Agriculture Council.

The draft mission of this council is to assist with regional coordination of agriculture issues, share cooperative resources, and assist with larger multi-town projects. The organization will work with existing town Agriculture Commissions and provide support for towns interested in forming an Agricultural Commission. The region's towns will have the option to be a part of the organization or not. There will be no charges to the towns for this council as it will be assisted by the River COG through the transportation program.

The guidelines for this regional organization will follow Public Act No 11-188 (see attached) This Act allows for the following services:

- provide overall data and information,
- education, assistance with grants,
- enable an regional agriculture understanding,
- provide information about zoning related to agriculture,
- support local programs relating to agriculture,
- provide advisory services,
- identify innovative agriculture opportunities,
- and support economic viability of agriculture in the municipalities.

Additionally, the COG- Transportation component will examine commodity sourcing, distribution, and other data as part of support for freight planning and land use management planning. Final organizational details for council membership and bylaws will be forthcoming. The existing organization will work on the overall structure for recommendation on membership, focused tasks, and goals.

If you have the opportunity, please let us know your comments and questions about the "Agricultural Council. This will provide everyone at the meeting opportunity to share ideas in the short time we have on Wednesday.

If there are any town needs that we can address with this, please let us know.

Thank you,

Janice Ehle/Meyer