

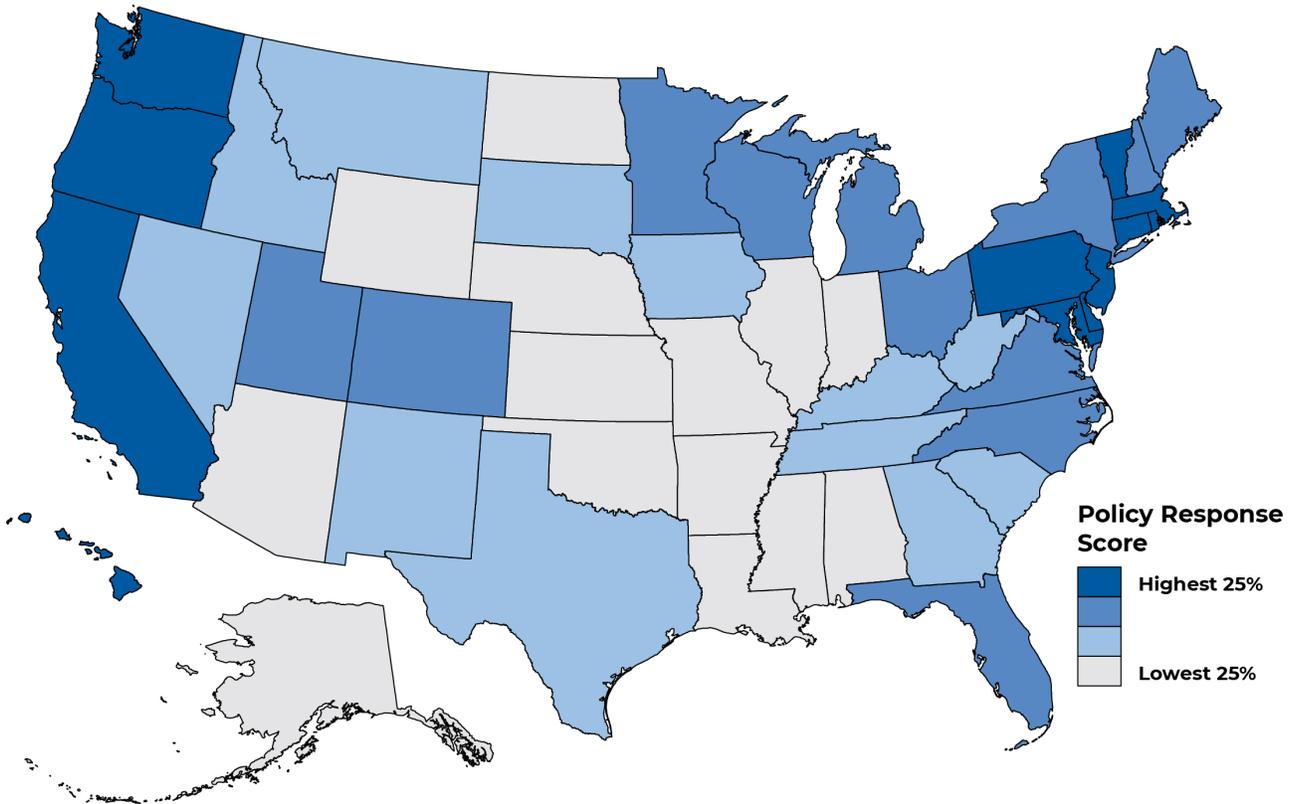
# THE STATE OF THE STATES

## Agricultural Land Protection Scorecard Highlight Summary

# Virginia

**Farms Under Threat: The State of the States** mapped agricultural land conversion and evaluated state policy responses. The Agricultural Land Protection (ALP) Scorecard evaluated six policies and programs that protect agricultural land from development, promote farm viability, and facilitate the transfer of agricultural land. American Farmland Trust (AFT) conducted research between 2016 and 2019 and used quantitative and qualitative factors to compare approaches that are tied to the land in all 50 states. Results for each policy are summarized in *policy scoresheets*; scores from the scoresheets are combined into Policy Response Scores in the *ALP Scorecard*. The map shows state Policy Response Scores by quartile.

### EXTENT OF STATE POLICY RESPONSES TO THE THREAT OF CONVERSION



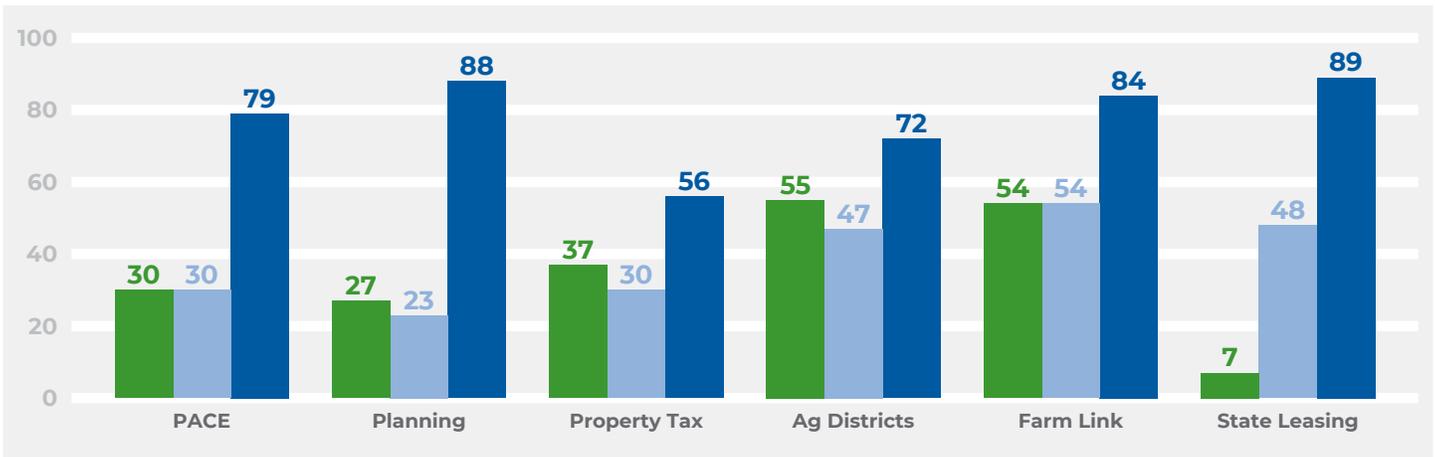
<p><b>RELATIVE CONVERSION THREAT</b></p> <p><b>HIGH</b></p> <p>Virginia scored among the top states for the conversion of agricultural land to urban and highly developed (UHD) and low-density residential (LDR) uses.</p>	<p><b>RELATIVE POLICY RESPONSE</b></p> <p><b>MEDIUM</b></p> <p>Virginia scored in the middle of all states for policies and programs that address the threat of conversion.</p>	<p><b>HOW IS THIS STATE DOING?</b></p> <p>Virginia is in an orange box because its conversion threat is higher than its policy response, relative to other states. Learn more at <a href="http://www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat">www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat</a></p>	<p><b>POLICY RESPONSE</b></p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p><b>CONVERSION THREAT</b></p> <p>Low Medium High</p>
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## HOW VIRGINIA STACKS UP

Virginia Score 

Median Score 

Top Score 



Policy scoresheet scores: Final policy scores compared to the median and the highest scores achieved by all states that have implemented each policy. Even among high-response states, no state received a perfect score for any individual policy; every state has the potential to do more.

## ABOUT THE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

### PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) programs permanently protect farmland and rangeland from non-farm development. They compensate landowners who voluntarily place an agricultural conservation easement on their property. Virginia's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services administers the Farmland Preservation Program, which provides funds for certified local governments to purchase easements. The Department of Conservation and Recreation administers the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation, which provides funds to entities for the purchase of easements.

### LAND-USE PLANNING

Land-use planning policies manage growth and stabilize the land base. Most states delegate planning authority to local governments, but some play a more active role, requiring localities to develop comprehensive plans, identify agricultural resources, and adopt policies to protect them. Virginia requires local comprehensive planning.

### PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Property tax relief (PTR) programs reduce property taxes paid on agricultural land. The most common approach is use-value assessment (UVA), which assesses farmland and rangeland at its current use value. Virginia administers the Land Use Assessment Program, which uses covenants to restrict enrolled lands to agricultural use.

### AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Agricultural district programs encourage landowners to form special areas to support agriculture. Farmers receive protections and incentives including: limits on annexation, limits on eminent domain, protection from the siting of public facilities and infrastructure, and tax incentives. Less common is requiring district enrollment to participate in state-administered PACE programs. Virginia's Agricultural Districts require local planning authorities to review and approve districts.

### FARM LINK

Farm Link programs connect land seekers with landowners who want their land to stay in agriculture. Administered by public or private entities, they offer a range of services and resources, from online real estate postings to technical assistance, trainings, and educational resources. AFT only included publicly supported programs. Virginia's publicly supported program is Virginia Farm Link.

### STATE LEASING

State leasing programs make state-owned land available to farmers and ranchers for agriculture. Sometimes their primary purpose is to make land available for agriculture. More often, agricultural use is secondary to generating income for a public purpose or protecting wildlife habitat.

## VIRGINIA: KEY FACTS

# \$0.10

AMOUNT INVESTED PER CAPITA IN PERMANENTLY PROTECTING FARMLAND THROUGH 2017

Among states with PACE  
Smallest (TX): < \$0.01  
Largest (DE): \$6.03

# 0.18

ACRES DEVELOPED PER NEW PERSON ADDED TO THE STATE'S POPULATION BETWEEN 1982 AND 2012

Fewest (CT/MA): 0.11  
Most (ND): 4.07

# ✓ YES

PENALTY IMPOSED WHEN LAND IS WITHDRAWN FROM PTR PROGRAM

States w/ penalty: 29  
States w/o penalty: 21



**Farms Under Threat** is American Farmland Trust's multi-year initiative to document the status of and threats to U.S. farmland and rangeland and to identify policy solutions to ensure the protection and conservation of America's diverse agricultural landscape. For more information about AFT, visit [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org). If you have any questions about the analysis methods or would like access to data, please contact AFT's Farmland Information Center: [www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org) or (800) 370-4879.



Explore our scorecard and scoresheets at [www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat](http://www.farmland.org/farmsunderthreat)