**§ 53-0305. Designation of commissioner.**

For the purposes of this title, the commissioner is designated as the appropriate state official to coordinate federal funding of urban forestry and arboriculture programs and by regulation may provide for the submission and approval of urban forestry and arboriculture plans. The department will also provide technical assistance to urban areas for urban forestry and arboriculture, and encourage the participation of municipal foresters, private agencies, organizations, firms, and individuals to furnish urban forestry and arboricultural services in order to carry out the purposes of this title. The commissioner may take steps necessary to facilitate the cooperation of private agencies and organizations with municipalities for the purposes of this article, including long-term contracts with private parties for the use of vacant public lands in or around urban areas, subject to other requirements of state law and the jurisdiction of other public agencies with respect thereto, for purposes of urban forestry and arboriculture under this article, and to provide trees and shrubs for planting in accordance with an approved urban forestry or arboricultural plan. This program shall be administered in cooperation with the Cornell cooperative extension and the soil and water conservation districts to avoid duplication between these agencies and the department.