



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, Inc.

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HB 6277 An Act Increasing Funding For Elderly Nutrition Programs.

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Senator Harris, Representative Villano and Members of the Human Services Committee, **CT Farm Bureau would like to be on record as giving full support** to this important legislation. Your commitment to addressing this issue is very key to Farm Bureau's success in promoting locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Connecticut has seen unprecedented growth in consumer demand for locally grown products, particularly in our 82 thriving farmers markets. We are extremely eager to see these farmers markets become more accessible to seniors across the state.

Over the past few years, the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program has been highly successful, providing coupons (worth \$15) to over 15,000 low-income seniors. In CT, the Senior FMNP has an impressive 70% coupon redemption rate. Because the coupons are directly paid by seniors to our farmers selling fresh fruit and vegetables, this program works as a wonderful stimulus to our producers who do direct marketing.

We believe the \$500,000 appropriation will allow us to do outreach and work with over 37,000 seniors. There is still tremendous room to expand and this bill helps do that.

CT Farm Bureau's only concern is that the administration of a substantially expanded Senior program may require additional coordination that is beyond the existing staff capacity of the Dept. of Agriculture. This bill represents a wise investment in the well-being and health of our seniors and represents a critical investment in the viability of our farmers and contributes to our thriving, bustling farmers markets.

Thank you again for raising this important bill and we urge your support. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Bonnie Burr at 860-2987-4406 or bonnieb@cfba.org