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Keith B. Bishop
Co-Owner & Winemaker
B.W. Bishop & Sons, Inc.
1355 Boston Post Rd.
Guilford, CT 06437-2399

March 5, 2008

To: Transportation Committee, CT State Legislature

Re: Testimony in favor of HB 5750

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives:

I am here to support continuation of existing billboard structures and their use by small businesses such as our 137 year old farm. I am a 5th generation farm owner with 30 years of hands on farm management. Our family operates a 313 acre fruit and vegetable farm, year round Farm Market, Farm Winery, and Pick-Your-Own operation in Guilford and Northford that employs over 150 people in a year. We were the 2001 National Winners of the Mass Mutual Family Business of the Year and recognized by the Ct. General Assembly for this accomplishment.

We use outdoor advertising as the backbone (approximately 65%) of our advertising program, and losing the right and ability to do so would have a tremendous negative impact. We currently have 4 billboards with 12 month contracts and have been using billboards for over 10 years. Our messages are clean, simple and a call to action to support CT Grown and the open space we have.

If we were to print and deliver our messages on paper, we would be using the equivalent of over 100 Tons of paper. That would not be acting "green" or follow our mission statement.

I understand the concerns surrounding the structures. However, they exist, and businesses are built upon their use. The State of CT needs to recognize their importance to generate taxes and revenue to CT, both directly and indirectly. Sending the message that confiscation of property will occur is not business friendly. The economy is weak. Helping make strong businesses means a stronger CT. and more jobs.

This legislature has supported open space, farmland preservation and other initiatives that recognize the importance of curtailing the loss of farmland and farmers. Billboards help us to "grow" and support us to keep 313 acres in farming. Please continue that process by allowing billboards to stay.

Sincerely,

Keith B. Bishop, Co-Owner & Winemaker