

# BISHOP'S ORCHARDS

QUALITY FARM PRODUCTS  
SINCE 1871

\*Orchard Hill Farm\* West Side Phone 35  
6 Generations in Agriculture

Walter Goodrich Bishop  
Burton Walter Bishop  
Arthur & Charles R. Bishop  
Albert & Charles E. Bishop  
Keith, Jonathan & Diane Bishop

B.W. BISHOP & SONS, INC.  
1355 BOSTON POST RD.  
GUILFORD, CT 06437-2318



February 18, 2009

To: Environment Committee, CT State Legislature  
Re: Support for Winery Signage HB 5495

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives:

I am a 5<sup>th</sup> 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 200 people in a year, had an annual payroll last year exceeding \$2 million, and currently has over 70 full and part time employees (during our slow period). We were the 2001 National Winners of the Mass Mutual Family Business of the Year and recognized by the Ct. General Assembly. In 2005, we started a new business venture, a licensed farm winery, and make wines from fruits only: apple, pear, peach, strawberry, raspberry and honey wines. Our winery alone generated over \$20,000 in Sales Tax Revenue in 2008, well exceeding our net profit.

Road signage for tourism exposure is critical to every CT Farm Winery. Most wineries are located in more rural areas, away from state roads. Those on state roads need signage at the nearest "busy" intersection that has tourism traffic.

There needs to be at least one additional Winery directional sign authorized. Currently, 2 sign options exist for wineries and vineyards. The "CT Wine Trail" sign has been limited to members of the CT Vineyard and Winery Assn. (CVWA), which leaves the "Tour: Vineyard and Winery" for non CVWA members.

Not all Wineries are able to give tours, and not all wineries have vineyards. At least 4 Farm Wineries produce only fruit wines and or hard cider, and hence have orchards, not vineyards where we grow our fruits. An additional sign should be worded "Farm Winery" with arrow and the CT Grown Logo. Attached is a DOT sign sheet showing the 2 currently approved signs.

In addition, I request that "Farm Attractions" be added to the approved users of the "Specific Information Signs and Business Signs on Limited Access Highways" program as described below.

These signs will let those traveling our Limited Access Highways know where they can find agricultural tourist attractions, including, but not limited to, including farm markets, "pick-your-own" and agri-tourism/ entertainment sites like wineries. The change needed is to have these applications be added to the permit application titled "Approval of Specific Information Signs and Business Signs on Limited Access Highways." This is NOT seeking an increase in the number or location of DOT "Qualified Interchanges and Approaches"

FARM MARKET - BAKERY  
WINERY - PICK YOUR OWN  
203-453-2338 Fax 203-458-7125  
[www.bishoporchards.com](http://www.bishoporchards.com)  
Dedicated to Growing & Providing  
Quality Farm Products Since 1871

# BISHOP'S ORCHARDS

**QUALITY FARM PRODUCTS  
SINCE 1871**

'Orchard Hill Farm' West Side Phone 35  
6 Generations in Agriculture

Walter Goodrich Bishop  
Burton Walter Bishop  
Arthur & Charles R. Bishop  
Albert & Charles E. Bishop  
Keith, Jonathan & Diane Bishop

B.W. BISHOP & SONS, INC.  
1355 BOSTON POST RD.  
GUILFORD, CT 06437-2318



FARM MARKET - BAKERY  
WINERY - PICK YOUR OWN  
203-453-2338 Fax 203-458-7125  
[www.bishopsorchards.com](http://www.bishopsorchards.com)  
*Dedicated to Growing & Providing  
Quality Farm Products Since 1871*

Here is program info without ag signs allowed.  
<http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?A=1394&Q=259522>

The Federal enabling regulations are found under MUTCD Section 2F.01 E.  
<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/hlm/2003r1/part2/part2f.htm>  
Approval of this language will only allow agriculturally related tourist businesses to join with Gas, Food, Lodging and Camping as approved uses and **not increase qualified locations.**

**Allowing this change will help the farm businesses and farm wineries attract tourists, and also help other area businesses have exposure once cars get off the highway.**

The number of farm businesses that would be eligible for this program is limited by the business location (must be near a limited access highway and also off of a qualifying interchange on DOT's "List of Qualified Interchange and Approaches). By allowing those who wish to pay the fees, signage, bonding and construction costs for this program, they also will help the state to promote tourism and add to the economic vitality of agriculture and its preservation by the private sector with **no cost to the state.**

Many other states have included "Farms" in this program by enabling legislation to what IS ALLOWED under the MUTCH regs. (see link). MA, NY, OH, PA, MD, NH, VT have long supported signage to identify farms off of highways.

Thank you for your understanding of my points, and knowing that I and the grass roots voting delegates of the CT Farm Bureau support my comments regarding HB 5195 via our policy vote..

Sincerely, *Keith Bishop*

Keith B. Bishop  
Co-Owner & Winemaker

## **AN ACT CONCERNING FARMS AND INTERSTATE SIGN PROGRAMS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) ~~The Department of Transportation shall include farms and farming activities related to agricultural tourism within any interstate sign program administered by said department pursuant to section 13a-123 of the general statutes. Such farms and farming activities shall be listed as attractions for purposes of any such program.~~

### **OPTION 1**

**Sec. 13a-123. Restriction of outdoor advertising on interstate, federal-aid and other limited access highways. Information centers at safety rest areas.**

(e) The following types of signs, displays and devices may, with the approval of and subject to regulations promulgated by the commissioner, be permitted within the six-hundred-sixty-foot area of interstate, primary and other limited access state highways, except as prohibited by state statute, local ordinance or zoning regulation: (1) Directional and other official signs or notices, which signs and notices shall include, but not be limited to, signs and notices pertaining to natural wonders and scenic and historical attractions which are required or authorized by law; (2) signs, displays and devices advertising the sale or lease of the property upon which they are located; (3) signs, displays and devices advertising activities conducted on the property on which they are located. (4) Directional signs to farms and farming activities related to agricultural tourism, subject to regulations under Sec. 13a-124a . Subject to regulations promulgated by the commissioner and except as prohibited by state statute, local ordinance or zoning regulation signs, displays and devices may be erected and maintained within six hundred and sixty feet of primary and other limited access state highways in areas which are zoned for industrial or commercial use under authority of law or located in unzoned commercial or industrial areas which areas shall be determined from actual land uses and defined by regulations of the commissioner. The regulations of the commissioner in regard to size, spacing and lighting shall apply to any segments of the interstate system which traverse commercial or industrial zones wherein the use of real property adjacent to the interstate system is subject to municipal regulation or control, or which traverse other areas where the land use, as of September 21, 1959, was clearly established under state law as industrial or commercial.

### **OPTION 2**

**Sec. 13a-124a. Specific information signs on limited access highways. Regulations.**

(a) As used in this section, "specific information sign" means a rectangular sign with the word GAS, FOOD, LODGING, ATTRACTION, or CAMPING and exit directional information pertaining to the designated motorist service placed at the top of the sign and upon which is mounted separately attached business signs showing the brand, symbol, trademark or name, or any combination of these, for the designated service available on a

crossroad at or near an interchange or intersection. Attraction is limited to farms and farming activities related to agricultural tourism for purposes of this section.

(b) The Commissioner of Transportation may issue permits for the erection and maintenance of specific information signs and business signs within the rights-of-way of any portion of a state-maintained limited access highway, except a parkway. The commissioner shall not issue any such permit to any person or company until such person or company files with the commissioner a bond or recognizance to the state, satisfactory to the commissioner and in such amount as the commissioner determines, subject to forfeiture upon failure to comply with (1) the requirements of this section, (2) regulations adopted pursuant to this section, or (3) any orders of the commissioner relating to the erection and maintenance of specific information signs and business signs. Any such bond or recognizance shall remain in full force and effect as long as such person or company is subject to any such requirements, regulations or orders as provided in this section.

(c) Any person or company issued a permit in accordance with subsection (b) of this section shall be reimbursed, by subsequent permittees on the same sign, the costs associated with said sign divided by the number of other permittees on said sign.

(d) The commissioner shall adopt regulations in accordance with chapter 54 to carry out the purposes of this section. Such regulations shall include, but not be limited to, establishment of (1) fees for the permits issued under subsection (b) of this section, (2) reimbursements issued pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and (3) standards for the location, size and maintenance of specific information signs and business signs.

## DIVISION OF TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

### SUBJECT:

Connecticut Wine Trail

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

To define the circumstances under which signing will be provided by the Department of Transportation.

### DESCRIPTION:

ConnDOT will install signs for those facilities which appear on the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association's "Connecticut Wine Trail" and are open to the general public during regular and reasonable hours which offer tours on a regularly scheduled or "on demand" basis. The signs will display the "Connecticut Grown" logo and appropriate directional arrow along with the words "Connecticut Wine Trail." (Sign No. 51-6975).

Facilities will be signed along the best route from the state highway, normally the nearest state route, as determined by ConnDOT. For those wineries and vineyards located on state highways, the above-described signs will be installed in both directions of travel at the site drive. No signing will be provided on expressways.

