

Please accept this as written testimony for bill 5504.

I am a volunteer working for the raw milk dairy producers of Connecticut.

Connecticut dairy farmers are some of the hardest working people in our state and deserve our respect and admiration. I am not here to ask you to reject any bills that will provide relief for these dairy farmers, but to consider an exemption for stores that sell less than 50 gallons of milk each day. Bill 5504 will negatively affect the sales of raw milk by eliminating many of the small retail outlets that sell raw milk. The extreme increase in the Dairy Retail License fee from \$30 to the minimum amount of \$500 is an amount that will deter small stores from selling raw milk altogether.

The majority of the stores that sell raw milk are small family owned general stores, mom and pop grocery stores and health food stores that have a very small mark up on the sales of raw milk. The raw milk dairy farmers are paid directly and fairly for the milk they produce by these retail outlets.

The revenues generated through these retail outlets would severely decline if bill 5504 is passed. Please do not allow bill 5504 do go through as written, it will indirectly affect bill 6313 that the Connecticut raw milk dairy producers and myself have been fighting against for the last 10 weeks. The part of bill 6313 that I'm speaking about is the right to sell raw milk in retail stores. The increase in the Dairy Retail License Fee will push these small stores out of the retail raw milk business.

Sincerely,
Heather Bunnell Thibeault
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