



NEW ENGLAND CENTRAL RAILROAD, INC.

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H.B. No. 5811 - An Act Concerning Battery Cages and Egg Laying Hens

February 9, 2009

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee, The New England Central Railroad would like to provide testimony opposing H.B No. 5811 specifically the provisions restricting cage layer production.

We are the primary supplier of rail service for the feed mills in Connecticut that provide the feedstuffs to Connecticut's farms and farm families. These farms range from small backyard operations that buy bags of feed from the local farm store to larger farms who manufacture and purchase feed in bulk. As one of our most significant customers, the targeted egg producing operations in Southeastern CT represent almost 40% of the business that we do in that area. In 2008, the NECR handled 1,870 railcars of feed grains that terminated on our line in CT. This legislation would force them to move their operations into other areas of the country. In an era when there is so much outcry over outsourcing of jobs and the continued pressure on CT's economy in competing for jobs, as well as the dwindling open spaces in CT, it would seem shortsighted to deliberately drive an operation such as this out of state. The long term impact on CT's farms and businesses would be widespread. The result of the loss of such volume and the potential added costs to feed mills and other businesses utilizing rail service could cause the cost of rail service in CT to increase or be reduced. Those costs would ultimately be passed on to farmers, straining even further an already strained agricultural economy, as well as all of industry served by rail in CT. In addition, we are constantly competing with trucks as a primary hauler of materials into the state. The potential shift of tonnage from rail to truck would put a burden on CT's transportation infrastructure. The far reaching impact of this type of legislation cannot be understated.

I urge you to recognize the value of the operations affected by this bill and support CT's agricultural economy by voting no to H.B No. 5811

Sincerely yours,

Charles D. Hunter, Director of State Relations- East



A RailAmerica Company