

February 17th, 2009

RE: OPPOSE RAID ON COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACT FUNDS (Bill 828, Sec 1w)

To Members of the Appropriations Committee

Please vote against Governor Rell's proposal to raid the Community Investment Act funds. Public willingness to accept this fee (\$30 deed recording fee) was based on the promise that this revenue would be permanently directed to farmland, open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing. 25% of these funds--approximately \$3.5 million per year--are dedicated for farmland preservation and agriculture viability programs.

Farmers, who are some of the hardest workers in our State, are the real victims of this proposed raid on Community Investment Act funds, which guts the state's investment in farm viability and farmland preservation programs. This cannot come at a more inopportune time, just as the CT Grown program is beginning to have a visible effect.

As a result of recent foreign and central distribution caused food contamination, and having become aware that the safety of our food supply is threatened, parents are demanding Connecticut Grown food in the schools, and residents are flocking to the farm markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) based organic growers. The dairy industry is re-inventing itself, and towns are beginning to invest in community owned farms. Agricultural Tourism is bringing business into our State, and the burgeoning equine industry is creating many millions of dollars in revenue, as well as being a source of much needed employment. Our little farm alone employs 12 people.

The farm preservation program preserves farmland from being turned irretrievably into asphalt, houses, and big box stores, and the agricultural viability programs are an essential element in keeping this land in production.

Please vote to keep this dedicated money where it belongs.

Sincerely,

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