

DATE: December 8, 2009
TO: Honorable M. Jodi Rell, Governor
Connecticut State Legislators
RE: Connecticut's Community Investment Act

Without local farms, there is no locally grown food.

I am writing to urge Governor Rell and all CT legislators NOT to move funding from the Community Investment Act system and to the general fund. Although we all understand that the State, and the Nation, have a critical budget crisis, this program is critical *to our future food supplies.*

I would rather forego some/many other government-funded services in order to preserve farmland in Connecticut. As a Stage 3 cancer survivor in remission since 1999, I cannot tell you how fearful I am of my family consuming food not grown in the U.S. I read every label of every product I purchase, and it is becoming more difficult to buy only food produced in the U.S. I can no longer metabolize vitamin D and many other nutrients, and achieving well-balance nutrition is a daily task. However, none of us can metabolize **methyl bromide, atrazine, and other chemicals commonly used in foreign food production.**

What about the budget crisis? In Connecticut, an average housing lot near my home sells for at least \$90,000/acre. If a neighboring farm were to sell to development, even if a modest 100-acre farm were subdivided and sold off at even 50% building lots, that would be \$4.5 million in the farmer's pocket. In very rough numbers, that farm family would have had to make a profit of \$112,500 annually over 40 years of farming, to compete with the development value of the farm. We all know that's not happening on farms in Connecticut. **The only thing keeping some farmland in CT is the Community Investment Act funding. Please keep this from going into the general fund.**

In contrast, when we buy locally grown food:

- We can save 1 million barrels of oil each week if each U.S. citizen eats just one meal a week made from local, organically grown produce (AFT);
- U.S. farms provide WIC coupons to 2.6 million participants annually; foreign farms provide -0-coupons (AFT);
- We eat food that hasn't traveled an average of 1,500 miles to reach us, a savings in preservation (chemicals, refrigeration, packaging), energy, and greenhouse gases (AFT); and
- ***We support a viable local economic base that is directly related to Connecticut's agricultural industry. Connecticut is not alone, and must do its part to preserve U.S. farms and fresh, safe food for all of us. Our local farmers' market in Wallingford is a huge success, and is always well-attended. Please keep the Community Investment Act funding intact for its intended purpose.***

We all know that temporary, short-term quick-fixes are not an answer to serious, long-term problems. The Community Investment Act funding for preservation of Connecticut's farmland is a significant, rational, long-term mechanism to support Connecticut and U.S. agriculture. PLEASE DON'T TINKER WITH SUCH A MEANINGFUL AND VITAL PROGRAM.

Dianne R. Saunders
72 Northford Rd.
Wallingford, CT 06492

Member, Wallingford Conservation Commission
Board member, Meriden-Wallingford Chrysalis, Inc.