

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Members

Connecticut State Environmental Committee
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please support the position of raw milk producers against proposed House Bills 6312, 6313 and 5504 now before the Environmental Committee. A public hearing is scheduled for Monday, February 9. Given the low incidence of food-borne sickness from raw milk products, these bills are an overreaction to one recent incident and their misguided provisions will not significantly improve overall food safety, but, instead, drive many small farmers out of business.

I own Cato Corner Farm in Colchester and have been making raw milk cheese since 1997. I turned to making cheese in order to save my herd of jersey cows in the face of the ever-falling price of milk. I cherish my cows and, for me, they have been the means to achieve my long-time goal of protecting my farmland from future development. This past year, this dream was finally realized when I placed my 75 acres under conservation through the Connecticut Farmland Trust and the United States Department of Agriculture Grasslands Reserve Program.

I have Connecticut licenses to produce raw milk and raw milk cheese. Our only end-product is high-quality cheese sold not only locally, but throughout the country and internationally. We employ 20 full-time/part-time people (including high school students) on the farm and another 9 people in New York City at the Green Markets where we also sell our cheese.

Raw milk cheese is already governed by fairly strict FDA regulations. Those requirements include aging the cheese for at least 60 days, so that all harmful bacteria will be naturally eliminated. In addition to federal inspections, I have always been totally cooperative with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and they have been very helpful with their promoting of local farm products and their suggestions and funding of improvements to our procedures and facilities. Because we want to provide cheese of the highest quality and safety, we are also members of the Vermont Milk Project and, consequently, we do much more testing to our milk and cheese than is required by Connecticut. Despite our extensive efforts to provide an enjoyable and safe cheese to our customers, there are sections of the proposed bill that, if passed, will, indeed, put us out of business.

The most Draconian requirement is to test for the presence of E. Coli in each cow's feces four times a year. For us to bear the cost of this testing (about \$440 per cow each year), we would have to pay at least \$17,000 a year! Most small farms are operating on extremely small profit margins (if not at a loss) and there is no way that this huge imposition can be passed on to our loyal customers. In addition, one of the proposals has added additional tests compared to earlier versions of the same bill. For example, testing for Listeria, Salmonella, Yersina and Campylobacter in addition to E. Coli in fecal matter is completely over the top in relation to its minimal probability of occurrence. The cost of these tests is still to be calculated and added to the growing burden being imposed on small farmers.

The monetary impact, unthinkable as it is, is not the main reason for killing this bill. I discussed this in detail with my veterinarians (Tufts University Ambulatory Clinic in Woodstock) and also with the laboratories that provide my own testing program. They all agree that the fecal E. Coli test is not an effective tool for improving milk quality or safety because it's merely a spot check. Cows can pass E. Coli one day and not the next. Also, a given herd always has E. Coli present in at least one cow. The proposed regulation also requires that a cow identified as having fecal E. Coli must be quarantined until cleared by a Department of Agriculture inspector at some unspecified time, either the next day or week or even the next month. The farmer then also has to pay for another follow-up test to clear the cow and wait even longer for the results. For a small herd owner, this is impossible.

The main point to be stressed, however, is that the problem and its solution lie not with the cow, herself, but rather with the people milking the cow and subsequently handling the product. Connecticut raw milk producers have an excellent record. The recent incident at Town Farm Dairy is an exception, even for Town Farm itself. For decades, the farm's reputation was excellent under the direction of a competent manager. It was only after he left, when well-intentioned volunteers tried to keep things going, that problems started to occur. The cow

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

identified there having fecal E. Coli did not, in fact, have any E. Coli in her milk. The only way that fecal E. Coli can get into milk is through careless or unsanitary technique. This contamination could be caused by something as simple as people neglecting to fully clean their boots when entering the milk storage room. To insure food safety after milking, workers must be thoroughly trained in proper handling and storage of the milk and cheese. The proposed tests will do nothing to improve this vital aspect of dairy farming.

From the viewpoint of real farmers and the network of animal professionals that support us, it seems that the proposed testing is completely arbitrary. Along with the negative provisions in the current deluge of other pending raw milk bills, one wonders if they were crafted to put small raw milk producers out of business. These tests are not required in any other state. Interested lawyers from the Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund have suggested that imposing such tests might be grounds for legal action against the state.

I urge you to further study this to understand the scientific basis for raw milk production. Please call me at 860-884-0496 if you would like to talk further about the facts or to just get to know more of the joys and hardships of small farming. By and large, small farmers are, indeed, really good, hard-working folks who believe in what they are doing, certainly not for the money, but for the principle. Please help us.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. MacAlister
Owner, Cato Corner Farm

To be presented as testimony for Bill # 6313

I am opposed to Bill # 6313 as it is currently written and urge you to vote against approving it. If passed as written the addition testing and being responsible for paying for that will put Stone Wall Dairy Farm out of business.

The costs of the required testing for a herd this size is \$11388. This breaks down as \$1620 for a monthly milk test and \$9768 for quarterly fecal testing of all milking age animals. An additional \$11380 expense in operating this dairy farm is more than I can bear and more than I will pass on to my costumers.

I hope to continue improving this farm and contribute positively to our community and our local food system. I currently employ two full time people and two part time people. As these improvements continue I would include more people in the farm operation. It is a thriving business and my customers are very appreciative of our products...and a working farm where they (young and old) can get a glimpse of how food is produced.

I choose to sell raw milk because knowing that it will not be pasteurized forces me to pay attention to details very closely and without exception. Knowing that this milk will not be pasteurized puts the responsibility on me take my time and be extremely careful. I cannot get more cows than I can handle in this way. These boundaries continually remind me that I am producing food for my neighbors and my friends, this is sacred work. This is how I can give back to my community.

I will work with the Department of Agriculture and any others to help achieve our common goals, safe food and thriving farms.

Thank you for your time, Chris Hopkins

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

We have been selling raw milk for over forty years at Pulaski Farm, Monroe, Connecticut. The cows are vaccinated, certified and samples of raw milk and water are taken periodically for testing.

The benefits of raw milk are never promoted. Some of the children of our customers are lactose-intolerant but yet are able to thrive on our raw milk. Five generations of the Pulaski family drank raw milk and made yogurt!

The late Dr. Kurt Oster, of Park City Hospital, Bridgeport, Connecticut was a great advocate of drinking raw milk. He maintained and defended that drinking homogenized milk was responsible for dead Korean veterans ages 20 - 30 years old to have arteries of 50 - 60 year old men!

We have and will have a health crisis forever if customers continue to consume foods that harm their immune system!

Due to our being almost 80 years old, it is sad the next generation will be deprived of what we took for granted!

Ruth and Fred Pulaski Sr., 188 Bug Hill Road, Monroe, Connecticut 06468 1-203-268-0359

My name is Paul Cesario. I am a veteran of foreign wars. I am honored to be a citizen and proud to serve our country. My testimony to you, and I speak for millions of others who don't have the education or even a computer to write on send email to. Raw milk contains nutritious vitamins and minerals. Consumers are misled by advertising believe that pasteurized milk is safer and healthy. This is far from the truth. Milk fat, from raw, grass fed cows is a golden yellow color and contains vitamins A and D needed for the assimilation of calcium. When you pasteurize milk you heat it to 300 degrees. If you are wondering what is alive at 300 degrees, imagine putting your hand in 300 degree water, do you think you would have a hand. I think not! Get the point! This is a short, but true explanation of the process. We have the right to choose what milk we put in our bodies. The farmers have the right to feed the cows grass and let them pasture in harmony with the universe. The way god intended them to be. Our founding fathers would not want us have this right taken from us. We ask you to join us in our rights reconstituted. Please represent us the people, and make true the statement with liberty and justice for all. Pass 6313 6312. How free is our country if we can not even choose what we drink. I have sacrificed years of my time for this country as a soldier. Now I think it is time for my councilmen and women to represent my voice. God Bless America.

Paul Cesario
CFP,CFHS,CHNT
paul@whatthehealthinc.com

We are against the proposed legislation that will be heard at the Environmental Committee meeting on Monday, Feb. 9 regarding changing the requirements for farmers and raw milk. We believe this proposed legislation will limit consumer options and further the demise of CT family farms: farms that are critical for open space, tourism, greenways, and food security. Thank you for your work to ensure that this legislation does not pass.

Sincerely,
Lisa Candels and John Noelke
P.O. Box 375 Pleasant Valley
36 East River Road
Barkhamsted, CT 06063

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Sirs and Madams,

My reason for writing you is to address the pending legislation regarding the sale of raw milk in the State of Connecticut.

People, like myself, who seek out raw milk are well aware of the miniscule potential for contamination. People who purchase raw milk are also looking for the health effects of this product. In both cases, these are well-educated and well-informed consumers. I am just one of thousands in the State that appreciate the ability to make my own purchasing decisions without state intrusion. Does it truly make sense to stifle the free commerce of the largely family farms in the State of Connecticut by restricting the sale of raw milk?

Another provision of this bill puts the burden of monthly and quarterly tests on the animals' milk and feces on the farmer. But only those that provide raw milk. Doesn't this create a suspect class of people without the due process of law? When was the last time a human got sick from raw milk? And why the burden on only those farmers who sell raw milk? Why not all dairy farmers? Don't the same risks apply, even after pasteurization? We've seen in recent days that even peanut butter can be contaminated and pose a threat to health, why should only the raw milk producers bear this burden?

The third provision provided for in this bill is the printing of labels. It is the position of this bill that consumers are too confused to understand that raw milk is in fact, raw, non-pasteurized. Do you really think people who choose to purchase this product are stupid, ignorant, or both? In any case, if you want to force labeling, why a second, more costly color? Do you not think consumers can read labels? With people more health-conscious than ever, people ARE reading labels and they're reading them in their entirety.

Passing this bill reflects an arrogance on the part of the legislature that demeans the intelligence of the consumers of the State of Connecticut. And I strongly recommend that you fight your urge to provide a nanny-state solution to a problem that does not exist.

Thank you.

Phil Franco

--

Philip Franco, LMT
203.988.5278
philaustin@gmail.com
CT Lic # 004383

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

I urge you to reject the upcoming Raised Bills 6312 and 6313. They will limit raw milk to on-farm sales only, and put severe and unnecessary testing and financial burdens on small, family-owned farms. I understand that you are on the Environmental Committee where these bills will be considered first.

I have been consuming raw milk and cheese for quite some time. Whatever you think about raw milk – even if the idea is unappealing to you – I think we can all agree that hardworking, responsible, taxpaying adults should have the right to purchase raw milk and cheese for themselves and their families.

There is no "health" crisis. I have researched this, and in recent memory there has been only one e-coli incident on a non-owner-operated farm, and no known incidents with milk from an owner-operated farm.

This makes no sense on so many levels: (a) The small farms are hurt. (b) The stores they sell through are hurt. (c) A healthy, natural food that our grandparents drank is removed from the marketplace. (d) Connecticut is deprived of sales tax revenue. (e) Connecticut is deprived of tourist dollars, as people come here from all over the northeast to buy raw milk. (f) We are deprived of our freedom of choice for no good reason. In fact, so many people and entities are hurt by this that you have to wonder who exactly is benefiting from this, and why it is being pushed so hard and so quickly.

In my opinion, this is nothing less than a war on small, family-owned farms, and by extension, all small businesses in Connecticut. The only purpose I can see for such legislation is to remove one of the few competitive advantages that small family farms have over industrial dairy processors: Without expensive changes in equipment and procedures, large dairy processors cannot produce a product safe and clean enough to be consumed unpasteurized.

Far more cases of e-coli and salmonella occur in other foods, including lettuce, tomatoes, spinach, peanut butter, and yes, even pasteurized milk. Yet no government agencies are attempting to limit or outlaw their sale and consumption.

Pasteurized milk can easily become contaminated after processing, whereas raw milk is the most accountable food-product we can buy because it comes almost exclusively from small, owner-operated farms.

These bills will do nothing to increase the safety of the public, and could put some of the few remaining dairy farmers out of business. It will remove a healthful resource from the Connecticut food supply. Finally, it will put a financial strain on a number of small businesses at a time when it seems clear that the financial well-being of Connecticut will rely on small business. I urge you to reject Raised Bills 6312 and 6313.

Please feel free to call or email me if you would like to discuss this.

Thank you very much.

Neil Weicher
202 Ocean Drive East
Stamford, CT 06902
Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.
(203)246-6507

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

I am greatly concerned about An Act Concerning Raw Milk. This act proposes increased labeling, on farm sales only, and increased testing, which will be funded by the producers rather than the State of CT. That stated reason for this change is to protect the public from the health risks of raw milk. But if this were true, then increased labeling, which the Raw Milk Producers of CT have already agreed is reasonable, would be entirely adequate. At the January 21st meeting of the Milk Regulation Board, the representative for the Department of Public Health said that he wanted to see raw milk made illegal. If this act is passed into law, there will soon be no producers of raw milk in CT because they will all be out of business.

Inspection of dairy herds for disease is not required for pasteurized milk, because it is assumed that pasteurization will eliminate all sources of infection, but this is not accurate. For example, the nation's largest recorded outbreak of *Salmonella* was due to PASTEURIZED milk contaminated with antibiotic-resistant *Salmonella typhimurium*. The outbreak, which occurred between June 1984 and April 1985 sickened over 200,000 and caused 18 deaths. And a 2004 outbreak in Pennsylvania and New Jersey involved multidrug-resistant *Salmonella typhimurium* infection from milk contaminated after pasteurization.

Pasteurization laws favor large, industrialized dairy operations and squeeze out small farmers. When farmers have the right to sell high quality, unprocessed milk to consumers, they can make a decent living, even with small herds. High quality milk is that which is produced from grass-fed cows kept in clean conditions. Milk produced in this way is both safe, and highly beneficial. Over the past eight years, Organic Pastures Dairy of Fresno, California has sold over 40 million servings of raw milk without one case of illness; during the same period the California Department of Food and Agriculture issued at least 19 recalls of pasteurized milk products. Frequent testing by Organic Pastures, the state of California, and the veterinary departments of local universities has failed to detect even a single human pathogen in their raw milk.

If the health and safety of the public is truly the issue, then consider the overuse and misuse of antibiotics, crowded feedlots, and the low-quality, low-cost feeds that are common elements of industrial agriculture. According to Robert Tauxe, CDC Chief of the Foodborne and Diarrheal Diseases Branch New food-borne pathogens have emerged from this model and more are expected. Tauxe also states that food-borne pathogens such as *Campylobacter*, *E. Coli* O157:H7, *Y. enterocolitica*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Listeria*, have only emerged within the past twenty-five years. In contrast, the five pathogens which plagued the early decades of the 1900's, when pasteurization was implemented, *Brucella*, *Clostridium botulinum*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Trichinella*, and *V. cholerae*, all combined account for only 0.01% of food-borne illnesses today.

An Act Concerning Raw Milk will do nothing to increase the safety of the public while simultaneously putting small farmers out of business, and removing a valuable and healthful resource from the food supply. I urge you to reject it.

Selina Rifkin
gelfling@charter.net

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

I am writing to ask you to oppose Bill 6313. I understand that this bill had been introduced to increase testing of raw milk as a way to improve food safety. I am not an expert on food safety, but I do know from both personal experience and information in the media, that increased testing does not necessarily lead to food safety.

I can absolutely confirm that having ingested raw milk provided by the Abbey of Regina Laudis for over 25 years that neither I, my husband nor my children (now ages 17-30) ever suffered adverse affects. In fact our general good health may in part be due to the fact that we eat the cheeses, ice cream and milk supplied by the Abbey on a regular basis.

I also know that increased testing and the cost associated with it will make the cost of the milk prohibitive and will eliminate the Abbey and other small dairies from being able to afford to bring their dairy products to the market.

As a registered nurse, a nursing instructor and a consumer I want the best of health and the best products for consumption for my family and those I care for. I believe that the current level of testing has worked well throughout all these years. I understand that improved labeling is being suggested and this on its own will allow all consumers to know what they are purchasing.

Please consider the negative effect this legislation, if passed, will have on those of us who wish to choose the quality foods these small, independently owned farms provide for us.

Sincerely

Nancy Stein RN, MSN
108 Main Street North
Bethlehem, CT 06751

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to urge you to reject the current bill being discussed, #'s 6312 and 6313. I am a member of the Fiddleheads Coop in New London and frequently purchase raw milk there.

Yes, a few people within the last 5 years became sick from drinking raw milk from 1 farm in CT. However, this is an extremely rare occurrence. Indeed, the numbers of people who become ill from eating any number of other foods (i.e., peanut butter, tomatoes, and goods from China) far, far exceed the numbers of people who suffer any ill effects from drinking raw milk. Why should all CT farms suffer from an incident caused by only 1?

I understand the concerns that brought this bill to fruition, namely the safety of consumers. Unfortunately, allowing raw milk to be sold only on the farm is a hardship to both the consumer who wants to buy the raw milk and the farmer who bottles it. If consumers are duly warned of risks, would that not address safety concerns? Rather than requiring, at added cost to the farmer, a label on each bottle of milk, why not require the business selling the milk to display a sign outlining any risks?

I believe there is a way to protect the public's safety, protect the vitality of small dairy farms, and preserve my ability to buy raw milk at my local coop where I buy my other groceries. Bill #'s 6312 and 6313 are not the way.

Sincerely,
Lauren P Gorham
Gales Ferry
932 Long Cove Road

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Senator Ryan, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee, I am writing to oppose two bills which would restrict the choices of consumers in the State of Connecticut:

- *H.B. No. 6312 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF ADULTERATED MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS*
- *H.B. No. 6313 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING RAW MILK.*

We live in a nation founded on principles of individual liberty; however, when I view legislation such as H.B. No 6312 and 6313, I worry that government is infringing on our rights as consumers. Ultimately, this includes the most important property right of all – the right to self ownership. That is, individuals have a right to make a decision for themselves.

In the case of these two raised bills, we have an effort to remove a product which is highly valuable to a particular set of consumers in the Connecticut marketplace – raw milk – which is being threatened for reasons which are largely unclear.

Certainly, the health risks do not justify depriving consumers of this choice: the Connecticut Milk regulatory board was only able to cite one recent occurrence of an outbreak – at which point the producer voluntarily stopped the sale of the milk. Consider this with the backdrop of a national salmonella outbreak due to peanut butter products – yet we will not ban or restrict the sale of peanut butter. Note that similar occurrences with spinach, tomatoes (and other produce), as well as *pasteurized milk* have not led to widespread unnecessary legislation.

I am left to wonder: why has raw milk been singled out for this treatment? Unfortunately, I believe this action reflects an attempt by industrial level dairy lobbyists to eliminate one of the advantages a small producer has over them. It should be noted that bills such as H.B. 6312 and 6313 can work to effectively create a cartel – where big business works with government to create laws and regulations which drive smaller competitors out of the market.

Let there be no mistaking it: this is what will occur if these bills are allowed to stand. Small farms will be hurt despite an outstanding record of quality and the stores that offer their products will suffer a loss of business and customer satisfaction. Those who would minimize the business impact of this bill are being intellectually dishonest. I say to members of the committee: You must understand that if you pass this bill, your action will put people out of work and your action will be shutting down these farms.

It would be shameful for the Connecticut state government to take such a heavy handed position towards small farms and small business owners at any point in time – but especially during a time of economic crisis.

We must again consider the consumer: certainly, he/she has made an educated decision to consume this product. It is not the place of government to take this decision from them. These “nanny state” policies only serve to deprive Connecticut’s citizens of their rights and liberty. Members of the committee, I say to you: not every incident is a call for government regulation. Do not let the heavy handed regulatory actions of other states confuse this issue for you – Connecticut should not feel a need to repeat bad decisions.

Remember that customers affected by isolated incidents have the right to legal action against the responsible party. Let this be the prevention for future incidents. I ask you to please reject H.B. 6312 and 6313.

Thank you for your time.

With regards,

Andrew M. Sica

Woodbury, Connecticut

Connecticut State Coordinator

Campaign for Liberty

(203) 241-4749

Andrew.Sica@CampaignforLiberty.com

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

For several years now I have thought of Connecticut as a leader in providing and promoting locally grown, organic, and/or raw foods. I learned today with great regret that the Connecticut Department of Agriculture wants to take a step backward and present legislation to restrict and perhaps eliminate our right to readily accessible Raw Milk.

One problem emerges- so let's punish the industry, let's restrict consumers' freedoms, and let's diminish the supply of one of the healthiest, most nutritious foods now available? We should be taking a step forward instead and making more available other raw milk dairy products, including cheese, butter, and cream.

Several years ago I was diagnosed with a chronic disease, peripheral arterial disease. I became dissatisfied with allopathic remedies; I gave up statin drugs and all the erroneous diet advice, and changed my diet to include more raw and fermented foods, grass fed beef and free range chickens and eggs. Raw Milk is a delightful and healthy part of my diet- I drink one to two gallons a week- and my disease has not progressed in over five years. I have no apprehension about drinking certified Raw Milk in Connecticut- as well as raw, free-range eggs.

I follow closely the Raw Milk programs in other states and the unbelievable strong-arm tactics employed by Big Dairy to try to ruin the Raw Milk industry- particularly in Pennsylvania and California. Don't let this happen in Connecticut. The safety record for Raw Milk in Connecticut, as well as the rest of the nation, is remarkably good- much better than for many other foods- including pasteurized milk.

Keep Connecticut a leader- support our Raw Milk program. We have a safe program which does not unjustly burden our local producers who should be supported.

Sincerely,

Daniel B. Lester
dblester12@mac.com

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

I am writing in reference to H.B. No. 6313 AN ACT CONCERNING RAW MILK which will be discussed at the Environmental Committee meeting on Monday the 9th.

I am strongly opposed to this Act. My family has been buying 4 gallons of raw milk each week from Deerfield Farm in Durham for the last 3 years. I researched raw milk extensively before I started buying it and I understand both the risks and benefits. I feel this milk, with the current testing standards, is very safe. I think it is clear from the peanut contamination currently in the news that all food has some risk of being contaminated. It's just the way it is. Pasteurized dairy also runs the risk of contamination. I would much rather trust my local farmers at Deerfield farm to keep my milk safe than I would some giant conglomerate with a huge factory somewhere.

My main concern is that the proposed additional testing would be so expensive that it would drive my farmers out of the raw milk business. That would be devastating for my family to lose the health benefits of the raw milk and it would also be devastating to the local economy. Selling raw milk is one of the few ways that small farms are thriving these days. I love giving my \$28 a week directly to my farm. I believe in buying local and supporting sustainable agriculture. These farms are both.

I am also concerned that the requirement to restrict milk to on-farm sales would be equally detrimental to farmers and may be enough to force many out of business. I was always so proud that Connecticut was one of the few states that allowed in-store sales. I find the reasoning behind this particular proposed requirement completely insulting. People are quite capable of reading. To imply that someone can pick up a bottle of raw milk and miss the warning label and the high price is ridiculous. And the milk is almost exclusively sold in health food stores, where the consumer expects unusual items and knows to read labels.

I hope that you will join me in trusting the current system already in place and deny this needless proposed Act.

Sincerely,
Jill Schoff

1012 Clintonville Rd
Wallingford, CT 06492
(203) 265-4261

I am writing to you in regards to the upcoming proposed legislation Jan. 21 concerning the sale of raw milk in Ct. I am a RI resident and purchase raw milk every week in CT. I consider raw milk to be a whole food which contains vital nutrients that are not present in processed milk (homogenized/pasteurized) due to the high temperatures that the milk undergoes. Small farms in CT, licensed and certified, that sell raw milk are now being threatened and may lose their rights to sell the milk to stores. And they also may have additional expenses imposed upon them to test for pathogens if this bill that is up for vote in Jan. is passed. What this would do to these farmers is essentially shut them down due to the high cost of doing such testing and lower incomes by not being able to sell to retail stores.

My family which includes two grandchildren thrive on this milk. It is fresh and delicious. The little farm where we purchase this milk is run by the finest people. Their barn is immaculate and they hold the highest standards for the way they milk and care for their animals.

So, I urge you do all within your power to support these small farmers to continue to sell to retail stores and to be free of costly, unnecessary testing of their cows. Thank you for your attention concerning this matter. I will be present at the Jan. meeting in Hartford to support raw milk.

Respectfully,
Hollie Galloway
353 Fry Pond Rd. ,West Greenwich, RI

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

I am writing to express my concerned opposition to bills Nos. 6312 and 6313, presently or imminently in consideration by the Committee on the Environment. Both bills address the production for sale and consumption of raw milk products.

My concern regarding 6313 is mainly a concern about imposing onerous and costly new regulations on production and for the sale of raw milk. While the proposed restrictions will make it more difficult for consumers who enjoy and prefer raw milk to find and purchase it, I am actually more concerned about the new burdens on farmers, particularly small farm operations in Connecticut.

I have had personal interest and professional engagement with small farmers for several years, and am concerned about how much harder and harder it is becoming for them to make a go of it. Dairy farmers (and small farm dairies in particular) face hardship, and imposing new restrictions, and the burden on them of new, high cost testing (and of questionable efficacy) poses new hurdles to their economic survival. The public policy justifications for this bill are not persuasive, and certainly aren't balanced with the needs, and potential plight, of the raw milk producers.

My concern regarding and opposition to bill number 6312 incorporates the reasons stated above with an additional personal interest. I am a very satisfied and happy consumer of cheese made from raw milk at the Abbey of Regina Laudis here in Bethlehem. The Abbey's excellent cheese is in great demand, is widely and nationally recognized as a high quality artisanal cheese, and it is a source of income for the Benedictine nuns who, with their cows help, produce this fine, fine cheese. I am afraid that the bill's application of the new requirements to cheese produced with raw milk will prove especially onerous to the Abbey dairy and budget, and this cheese may no longer be available to us. That would be a financial loss to the Abbey, a loss to me and the many devotees of their cheese, and a loss to a cultural heritage that has been cherished and sustained by the monastery.

I urge your opposition to these bills, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Kate Jackson
4 Green Hill Road
Bethlehem CT 06751

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Representative,

Please be aware of a proposed bill that is soon to cross your desk concerning the raw milk and aged raw milk cheese producers of Connecticut. This subject is very important to my family, and myself and we would like your support.

Our son had serious growth and intestinal problems until we were advised by our doctor to try him on raw cow's milk. Because my husband and I are both RN's and understood the value of pasteurization, we did quite a bit of research, and found a farm in Durham (Deerfield Farm) that adheres to strict standards of hygiene that we were comfortable with. Since we switched him to the raw milk he has absolutely thrived! And his intestinal problems that had been severe were completely resolved. We also enjoy their raw aged cheeses. This farm is excellent in the care they give their cows, and in the conscientious way they keep the products safe for us. As nurses, we know that raw milk is not for everyone. Pasteurization has helped many people avoid illness associated with mass production and long distance shipping of products. But at the local level, provided care is taken, pasteurization is not necessary. We firmly believe that raw milk is a very important food source for many people including us, and we desperately want to keep the right to affordable access to this wonderful food. Our son's health depends on it.

I urge you to take action and reject this bill. Buying raw milk and aged raw milk cheese is a choice and choice is a freedom. Please help us to keep the freedom to buy raw milk and aged raw milk cheese at my local grocery store without any additional costs or hindrances to the farmers.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,
Kenny R Beadle RN & Keren J Beadle RN

Please be aware of a proposed bill that is soon to cross your desk concerning the raw milk and aged raw milk cheese producers of Connecticut. This subject is very important to me and my family and we would like your support. I urge you to take action and reject this bill, which will limit sales to the farms only and require additional testing that could very well put our small dairy farmers out of business. The question is not whether raw milk is inherently dangerous (it's not) but whether we, as adult Americans, have the right to make that decision for ourselves. Buying raw milk and aged raw milk cheese is a choice that I feel I have the right to make. After all, food borne illness is an unfortunate reality in ALL food production - how many times in the last year were there national food recalls? - and I feel it is extremely unfair to single out the small farmer. Please help us to keep the freedom to buy raw milk at my local grocery store without any additional cost to the farmers. Please support freedom of consumer choice! And save Connecticut's small farms!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Terri C. Viani

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Sir/Madam,

I writing to ask you to seriously consider the many reasons to defeat any legislation that would place added burden and costs on the farmers of Connecticut. There are indeed far too few dairy farms left in our Sate and we need to do all we can to enable these farms to continue without excessive legislature that would and could cause them to stop farming. The proposed 639 is just one such piece of legislation.

Why, one might ask, would dairy farmers not want to implement measures to ensure the safety of milk? Why, one might ask, would one want to drink raw milk or make cheese and other products from raw milk? Why, one might ask, would a consumer not want to purchase pasteurized and homogenized in supermarkets?

Firstly, the current requirements now in place are sufficient to insure the health and safety of consumers. The recent peanut butter scare is proof indeed that even with stringent regulations there are serious and fatal health issues. More and more people are aware of the nutritional value that is lost when products are processed in any way. More and more people are aware of the benefits of eating food and food products that are locally grown. Our bodies are less likely to have adverse or even allergenic reactions to such food as we build up our immune system to protect us from foods that are grown and produced where we live.

Instead of asking why would a consumer want to purchase raw milk and products made from raw milk, it might be better to assume that such people are intelligent and informed consumers. They must make an extra effort to purchase and are certainly aware of the safety standards such farms maintain. Some would say that this is not true of the uninformed consumer. Although this is indeed true, it is not likely that the uninformed consumer will take the necessary steps to find out where these products are sold. In any event, such consumers are not going to take the steps necessary to insure safety in food products.

I would rather pose the question: 'Why would the State ad this time in our history, want to enact more and more expensive legislation that would only burden the farmer. Would not such legislation also create an even greater drain on an already drained state budget. Governor Rell, in her address today, spoke of closing and cutting back on several state agencies. Why would now create a new one?

I am a mother of three, a grandmother of three, an educator, and an informed consumer. Fifty years ago, my mother traveled to New York Sate to purchase raw mil for her children. If this legislation is passed, many will do the same.

The farmers are Connecticut want to remain in Connecticut. Those who do make available to us raw milk and raw milk products are most likely more careful to maintain strict sanitary levels with their animals. in most cases, these animals are free-range and free of antibiotics and animal products. These latter do more harm and create a greater health hazard to the general public. The headlines concerning contaminated food are now commonplace. When was the last time a Connecticut state resident became ill because of raw milk or raw milk products?

Be prudent, yes, but also be wise. Do not deprive us of local grown and produced products that will not be available to us if this legislation passes. Do not burden the farmers with excessive and expensive legislation that would prevent them for making these products available only to those who choose to purchase them. How many more state dairies will be forced to cease dairy farming because of the burden of this legislation?

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. Please take the extra tie to reflect seriously on the issues raised herein. I thank you for your consideration and effort in this important matter.

Sincerely yours,

Sally Campbell
78 Harrison Lane
Bethlehem, Ct.06751

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

This letter concerns the raw milk legislation that is currently being considered. For your reference, the bill number is 6313.

As a consumer of raw milk, I believe raw milk should remain a viable choice for consumers. I strongly believe that consumers should have the right to choose between raw and pasteurized milk.

I believe that the amended labeling of raw milk products will be sufficient to alert the consumer that they are purchasing raw milk. I do not believe that the State of Connecticut should limit the location of retail of raw milk to the farm only. Raw milk should be available at health food stores and farmers markets, as is currently the case. This is the only way that all discerning consumers -- even those without automobile access -- can have access to raw milk. The new labeling will clearly remove any possible confusion that the consumer has about the type of milk they are purchasing.

The proposed consumer poster is redundant. Consumers do read labels on products -- especially those they pay a premium for, which is certainly the case for raw milk. Other unpasteurized goods have no such requirement, even if they are equally likely to transmit harmful bacteria to the consumer. Unpasteurized apple cider, for example, is not required to have a poster, and is simply labeled as unpasteurized. The same labeling for raw milk should be sufficient. Second, the additional testing requirements proposed in the bill will place a significant financial burden on the small farmers that produce raw milk in this state. The testing proposed in this bill exceeds that of most other states, and I do not believe you can ask the raw milk farmer to bare the burden of the additional tests. The increased cost of implementing this additional testing, particularly in the current economy, may put small raw milk farmers out of business.

I do not believe it is prudent to reduce the number of jobs available in small Connecticut towns, where most of the raw milk farms are located. These small farms are important to these small towns, and contribute significantly to the charm Connecticut has to offer visitors to our state. Further, with the economy in recession, it just does not make any sense to put these farms out of business. These are hardworking farmers who produce a quality product. They should be entitled to make a living as such without interference.

The raw milk industry in Connecticut is something that Connecticut can and should be proud of. It produces a quality product: both the raw milk and raw milk cheeses are some of the best that can be found. In particular, Deerfield Farm, Durham and Foxfire Farm, and Mansfield Center produce extremely tasty raw milk, and notably Cato Corner Cheese, Colchester produces some of the best raw milk cheeses that you will find anywhere in the world (including France). Bill 6313, in its current form, will only succeed in forcing these exceptional businesses to either close or seek residence in another state.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Williams
New Haven resident

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Environment Committee Members:

I am writing as a citizen to express my extreme disturbance over An Act Concerning Raw Milk (bill number 6313) and An Act Concerning the Sale of Adulterated Milk and Milk Products (bill number 6312). My concern primarily relates the former, but both bills are troubling.

First, on-farm sales restrictions of raw milk and raw milk products will unduly burden these farmers and it will effectively put most of them out of business. Most consumers who want to purchase fresh, unpasteurized milk will not be able to drive to a farm to do so.

Second, the cost of the proposed tests is prohibitively expensive. I believe it is clearly a design to put these small, honest, hard-working farmers out of business. They will not be able to continue operating under the additional financial burden of these tests, tests whose benefit is highly questionable.

I would like to make something clear. The choice to purchase raw milk is a personal one. I do not in any way appreciate the state attempting in yet another way to control my life. I am not an idiot, nor are other consumers of raw milk. I personally graduated with a B.A. *summa cum laude* and I have a law degree from a respected law school. I know how to think for myself, which is precisely why I made the decision over a year ago to start buying raw milk for my family. The decision came after painstaking months of research. I highly resent the implication shrouded in this legislation that I am too stupid to make such a decision for myself.

People who shop at health food stores are intelligent enough to know what they are buying. If the CDA truly is concerned that some total dim-wit mother will randomly pick up a jug of raw milk for her family while she shops at the health food store--a scenario that I find highly implausible--then the labeling proposal contained in the bill is sufficient to put the CDA's fears to rest. I understand that the farmers have agreed to the proposed labeling.

I am aware of the angry tone in my letter. My anger is not directed at the Environment Committee members or at my district representatives. However, I *am* furious about this issue. It is one more issue on top of numerous recent issues that have led me to become distrustful of and disgusted with the government that is supposedly entrusted with the preservation of my and my fellow Americans' interests, rights, and liberties. I do not need a nanny. I need representatives who safeguard my rights granted under the United States Constitution.

Please do not allow these bills to pass. Thank you for your diligent attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

Catherine Cordick Heiser

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To Whom This May Concern,

I am a new resident in Voluntown, Connecticut and had learned that raw milk was legal to distribute here; you can't imagine how excited I was! My previous provider was a local family with 8 to 12 Jerseys (only about 4 to 5 producers at a time) who had nothing to do with all of their extra milk but give it away to friends. Since it is illegal to sell in their location, they were just barely able to give away all of this excess. People slowly began 'donating' funds to make up for the feed and hay costs which were on the rise this past summer, word amongst friends about this amazing raw milk and cream spread, and the family was finally able to afford their growing family and enjoy what they love. Personally, I used their milk for all sorts of things that I couldn't use store-bought sterile milk for: homemade yogurts, creme fraiche, cheeses, whipped desserts, butter, the product was the BEST multi purpose thing that I could get my hands on! None of my family ever complained, or got sick as so many people assume would happen, from this unpasteurized dairy gold! We just recently bought out first 1/2 gallon of pasteurized milk in a few years and it tastes like water with maybe some dry milk solids added or something. All of that rich flavor is gone, I can't make any cheese or yogurt for the kids, the coffee in the morning is better off black, (very disappointing) and our family is not able to afford these luxuries at store prices these days. Butter is used sparingly now and treated as a delicacy amongst us because we know that we can't just run down to the farm and get the supplies to make more. Then I hear that we can acquire raw milk nearly anywhere here in Connecticut! What a delightful surprise! I can't wait to find a store that sells this dairy gold and stock up!

But wait; what is this I hear about outlawing the dairy gold? NO NO NO!!! Once it is gone, it won't come back; not here in this state anyways. What will happen to all of those small farmers and their families that rely on the sale of their milk and other products? How long has it been legal and how long have these farmers been selling their milk for income? Grain and hay is now too expensive to pay for unless you can put a dent in those costs by selling your excess no matter what the product. Where will their livelihoods go and what will they have to do to make up for the loss of income? We are in a total state of disrepair and financial peril here in the U S of A; why oh why would anyone want to worsen this situation by taking someone's income away for the ridiculous act of pasteurization? Pasteurization is a useless act in the case of a farmer who knows what they are doing with their product. It is a waste of time to do, never mind the amount of money someone would have to spend for this 'up-to-date' equipment. It would be impossible for all of those small farmers to stay in business unless the state of Connecticut were to just give all of them the equipment they 'need' if their milk has to be pasteurized. That isn't even considering what the board of health will do to those poor farmers. Oh yeah, and what about us the consumers who rely on using raw milk for so many things? Do we just have to go without cheese, butter, and yogurt?

I guess it all boils down to this: Why would you want to change an already established system (or way of life) that works for so many people and their families? Thank you for your time and for reading about my personal qualms with this bill. I realize that I am only one person with one family but how many others like myself are there out in Connecticut?

Thank You,

Lyndsey
LCA097@hotmail.com

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To be presented as testimony for bills 6313 and 6312.

My family has benefited tremendously from raw milk. We use it to make raw kefir. We also use raw butter and raw cheese. All four of my sons were vitamin D deficient, and have benefited greatly from raw dairy. Their latest blood work has verified this. I suffer from several autoimmune diseases, and raw milk has helped me to be on an anti-inflammatory diet. My one son has had a red mark on his face, on his left cheek, for several years now. No doctor I have seen has been concerned about it or offered any treatment, even though the inflamed blood vessels are visible through his skin. I realize the seriousness of this, as untreated inflammation has contributed to my health issues. My son's red mark has decreased in size and intensity since drinking raw milk kefir this past year. We recently had to deal with a family issue, and I was not giving the boys kefir as frequently during that time. My son's red mark got much worse and is only now decreasing since I have increased his intake of kefir. Raw milk and raw milk products are essential to the health of my family.

Thank you for your attention to my letter.

Sincerely,

Kelly Bumb
20 Abinet Court
Selden, N.Y. 11784

I regret that I will not be able to attend this hearing, as I have school age children. My family and I have been consuming raw milk from a local producer for 10 years. We have three children, ages 4, 7 and 10. My children have remained very healthy while drinking raw milk. My three children rarely need to visit the doctor, aside from their annual well-visits. My husband and I believe that consumption of raw milk is vital to their health. We would be very disappointed if raw milk were not available in the state of Connecticut. This is the first I have heard of this bill; I did not realize that the availability of raw milk was threatened here in Connecticut. Please do not remove this vital source of a healthy food. It is extremely important to my family.

Sincerely,

Christine K. Bruck
22 Taylor Terrace
New Milford, CT 06776

RAW MILK IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A HEALTH GIVING, DISEASE HEALING DIET. IT HAS HEALED AN ULCER THAT I RECEIVED DO TO MEDICATION. SINCE I WENT ON A RAW DIET ALL MY HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE GONE. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY AND "MEDICINE FROM OTHERS. ALSO, MY HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER GET ILL FROM PASTEURIZED MILK, BUT SUFFER NO ILL EFFECTS FROM RAW MILK. ACTUALLY, IT HAS IMPROVED THEIR HEALTH IN SEVERAL WAYS. PASTEURIZED HOMOGENIZED MILK IS NUTRIENT DEFICIENT AND TOXIC. PLEASE DO NOT BAN RAW MILK. IT IS AKIN TO BANNING HEALTHY CLEAN AIR AND ALLOWING ONLY POLLUTED AIR TO BE AVAILABLE. WE HAVE A RIGHT TO HEALTH NATURALLY VERSES ILLNESS VIA PROFITS. HELP!!!

THANK YOU
CATHY WYGLADALSKI

To be presented as testimony for bills 6313 and 6312.

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

My family has benefited tremendously from raw milk. We use it to make raw kefir. We also use raw butter and raw cheese. All four of my sons were vitamin D deficient, and have benefited greatly from raw dairy. Their latest blood work has verified this. I suffer from several autoimmune diseases, and raw milk has helped me to be on an anti-inflammatory diet. My one son has had a red mark on his face, on his left cheek, for several years now. No doctor I have seen has been concerned about it or offered any treatment, even though the inflamed blood vessels are visible through his skin. I realize the seriousness of this, as untreated inflammation has contributed to my health issues. My son's red mark has decreased in size and intensity since drinking raw milk kefir this past year. We recently had to deal with a family issue, and I was not giving the boys kefir as frequently during that time. My son's red mark got much worse and is only now decreasing since I have increased his intake of kefir. Raw milk and raw milk products are essential to the health of my family.

Thank you for your attention to my letter.

Sincerely,

Kelly Bumb
20 Abinet Court
Selden, N.Y. 11784

It has come to my attention that a bill is being proposed to ban the selling of raw milk in stores in Connecticut. As someone who has been drinking raw milk for some years now, I would like to voice my opposition to this bill. Raw milk is healthier for you as it contains all the vitamins and enzymes that have not been destroyed by pasteurization. It is not homogenized and the fat molecules are nice and big and hence do not pass thru the intestinal wall. For people that are lactose intolerant, like my husband, it still contains the enzymes necessary for proper digestion. I drank raw milk as a kid and I'm still here so please don't tell me it's dangerous. It is MY DECISION, not the states, to decide what is bad for my health! If this bill comes up for review, Please vote no and keep my right to purchase and drink raw milk.

Cathy Zbuska
111 swimming hole rd
harwinton, ct 06791

Please do not take the option for us to purchase raw milk and milk products away from us. My family and I have allergies to processed milk and the poisonous additives in it. Again please do not take our choices away from us!

Thank You,
Mrs. Ellen McManus

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Legislators -

Please support existing language to keep raw milk available in stores as it stands right now. The proposed advisory warning label has been agreed upon by the producers. This new labeling will eliminate any customer confusion as to what kind of milk consumers are purchasing.

The state's proposed enhanced testing exceeds that of other states which permit the sale of raw milk. The burden of these additional testing fees cannot be paid by the farmer (it will put them out of business). The proposed fecal testing has not been proved reliable and is not a good indicator of milk quality.

The proposed consumer advisory poster is redundant and a misplaced sign could lead to confusion for the consumer. It would be difficult for producers who are not present in the stores to monitor sign placement.

Please also SUPPORT Bill 5800. Taken together your actions nay, nay and yea are a prudent approach to improving the health and economic viability of our state.

Thank You,

Dave Fairman
Waterford, CT 06385
860 857-1269

As a concerned Mother I am writing this brief but important memo to you. I am a mother of two young girls, and have tried to do as much in my power to give them the best foods for their health, which includes as much organic foods as possible, and of course as much Raw foods as well. It is more difficult in today's society to provide raw foods, which is a travesty in my eyes. Although science has done wonders for mankind, I do not believe that it belongs in our foods. In the long run we usually end up doing more hurt than good when science tries to alter our very natural sustenance. Please keep our families as raw and organic as possible. Please fight to keep the healthiest items available to our children.

Sincerely,
Keisha Hoar

KMC, LLC
R F Crossen Contractors, LLC

R F Crossen Group, LLC
174 Merrow Rd
Tolland, Ct 06084
Licensed in State of CT
crossenk@tiac.net
860-870-1116
860-871-7675 fax

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To be presented as testimony for bill 6313 and 6312

Dear Environmental Committee and State of Connecticut Legislators,

Please accept this letter/e-mail as our statement of opposition to any legislation that would limit in any way our access to purchase retail raw milk throughout Connecticut.

We believe that raw milk has nutritional benefits and want the freedom of choice to continue purchasing this product in retail stores and farmers' markets.

Since 2003 our specialty foods company, Artisan Made-Northeast, has been working with small farms and artisanal, small batch producers in Connecticut and throughout the Northeast US. The consumer demand for aged, raw milk cheeses and raw milk has been growing dramatically over the past several years. American made, aged, raw milk cheeses make up the cheese plates of top restaurants in Connecticut, New York City and throughout the US. The safety record of these products is commendable.

Thousands of consumers in Connecticut and the Northeast US will oppose any legislative attempts to limit their access to raw milk and aged raw milk cheeses.

Sincerely,

Thomas & Sally Camm
Artisan Made-Northeast, LLC
760 A Main Street South
Southbury, CT 06488
203 262-9390

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Environmental Committee,

This letter concerns the raw milk legislation under your consideration.

I would like to register my strong opposition to this legislation.

My reasons are as follows:

1) Firstly, Connecticut can and should be proud of its raw milk industry. There should not be attempts to slowing kill off the industry. The raw milk products of CT are first rate in quality. From my experience, both the raw milk and raw milk cheeses are some of the best that can be found. My favorite raw milk producers are Deerfield Farm, Durham and Foxfire Farm, Mansfield Center you can taste the regional differences from where the cows graze. I also add that Cato Corner Cheese, Colchester manufactures raw milk cheeses that are equal in quality and taste to those anywhere else in the world period. These enterprising small businesses should be helped and not hindered, they make Connecticut unique.

2) I strongly believe that raw milk should be allowed to be purchased at grocery stores and farmers markets. These two bills represent a clear attempt to limit choice for the consumer and I strongly disapprove of this. As the consumer it is my right to choose the products I buy and where I buy them. With the labeling of raw milk products, there can be no confusion as to what people are buying. I also add that with the cost of raw milk about twice that of pasteurized milk, raw milk cannot be mistaken for pasteurized milk.

3) The proposed additional testing will surely make raw milk production unviable. You cannot expect the farmers to burden the costs of these additional tests. These tests are also well beyond that of other states where raw milk can be purchased. By allowing this bill to pass/proceed in its current for, you will burden the raw milk farmers to the extent that they will be forced out of business. This will clearly reduce the number of jobs available where the raw milk farms are located. I think this is a erroneous move with the economy currently in recession and looking to stay that way for a while. How can you support a bill that will further increase the unemployment rate of your local constituents? No logical person can do such a thing. These small farms contribute to the mystic Connecticut has to offer tourists in our State. They should not be forced out of business.

4) Lastly I make this point. Apple cider is allowed to be sold unpasteurized with few restrictions, apart from the unpasteurized labeling. Why should raw milk products be discriminated against, when other products are not held to the same labeling and testing requirements as stipulated in this bill? I do not think this is fair on the raw milk producers, it is discriminatory. They produce an excellent product, and their enterprising nature, in the USAs true tradition, should allow them to be rewarded.

I appreciate the time you have taken to consider my views.

Thank you
James Gilmore
East Rock, New Haven

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Environmental Committee, Connecticut State Congress

Our family supports the production and sale of raw milk in the State of Connecticut. We have visited many producers in the State and have been impressed with the cleanliness of their milking parlors and the health of their herds. The raw milk tastes great and is very nutritious.

Please do not add more laws and more requirements onto an already over-burdened farmer population. We absolutely need these raw milk producers to thrive in our State. My understanding is that about half of our liquid milk consumption in Connecticut comes from outside the State. Why worry about our Middle East oil dependency when the State of Connecticut can't even feed itself! Most of our food supplies are half a continent away.

I don't think it's a good use of the State's limited resources to even consider imposing more regulation on an industry that doesn't seem to need it. If you want to protect consumer health, better to add more Troopers to catch DUI drivers than legislate a bunch of dairy farmers. According to the Center for Disease Control, no one has ever died from raw milk consumption, ever. It would seem like you could find something a bit more hazardous than raw milk to regulate.

Sincerely,

William Farrell
139-3 Joshuatown Road
Lyme, CT 06371
T: 860-434-6872

I am writing to ask you to Oppose Bills 6312 and 6313 - The sale of raw milk in Connecticut does not require further legislation.

My family and I live in the NW corner of Connecticut. We drink raw milk exclusively. For a long time now, I have been studying nutrition. The information put out by the Weston A. Price Foundation has convinced me of the merits of drinking whole raw milk (contrary to the popular understanding).

I was diagnosed with osteoporosis at age 35. I am told that I have the bones of a 100 year old woman. My health challenges have blessed me, in that they have spurred me on to find out for myself what is nutritionally helpful. To my doctors surprise, my bones are actually getting stronger. I am here to tell you that 40 years of drinking store bought pasteurized milk weakened my bones. But the last 2 years of drinking raw milk has been strengthening them. In fact, I would be at the hearing, in person with my family on Monday, February 9th - but I am scheduled to have my yearly bone density scan done than same morning.

Those of us who drink raw milk are a rare breed. No one goes and buys raw milk unawares. It is considerably more expensive than pasteurized milk. Those of us who buy it know what we are doing and why we are doing it. We believe raw milk to be considerably more healthful than pasteurized milk. We consider pasteurized milk to be poison (or pretty close to it!)

These bills would make it much harder for raw milk to be produced and sold in Connecticut. Recently we went without it for a month - one local cow was "freshened" and the other sold. I had to work hard to find another source. Please read the information on the Weston A. Price website regarding raw milk. And please oppose these bills. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Deborah Paisley Hillegeist
12 Meadow Lane
Lakeville, CT 06039
860-435-6565

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Members of the Environmental Committee:

I may be unable to attend the hearing on Feb. 9, 2009, but I wish to make the reasons for my opposition to the proposed legislation concerning raw milk production and sale in our state.

I believe I represent a minority among raw-milk drinkers, in that I am not motivated by any belief in health benefits, or any particular love of conducting my life in a manner that deviates from the norm. For me, it is a simple question of FLAVOR and FRESHNESS. I used to make special trips to Shepherd Farm, in Bethany, once a week, just to purchase my milk, at great expense of energy and time, until I discovered, one fine day, that I lived in one of the few states remaining where farmers could deliver their raw milk to the local stores willing to take especial precautions to keep it sufficiently cold, so it could be sold in stores.

This was a fortunate discovery, because, unable to withstand the pressure and expense of farming, Shepherd's Farm stopped operating, and now, if I had to drive to a farm to buy my milk, it would mean reserving a half-a-day for the errand to another part of our state.

The present bill proposes making it impossible for a retail store such as "Edge of the Woods" in New Haven or "Thyme and Season" in Hamden, from offering the raw milk of our dairy farms, and requiring everyone who drinks raw milk, whether they do it for the sake of the good flavor, known origin, and freshness--like me--or whether they do it for some crackpot belief in enzymes or spiritualism--to get in their cars, waste gasoline and time, pollute our air--in order to travel to the few farmers left who can withstand the new legislation.

The argument that this measure seeks only to protect the public's HEALTH does not convince me: the same stores which would be banned from selling raw milk may, if they wish, sell tobacco to adults willing to take the risk of smoking, and citizens are not required to drive to distilleries to purchase the alcohol which is KNOWN to be a leading cause of death in our state: they can buy their poisons at the local liquor or tobacco store. I need hardly point out that both tobacco and alcohol may be regarded as a far more serious health threat than raw milk.

We are facing a period of economic crisis. Our wise governor has called for a SHRINKAGE of government controls and supervision, particularly where it is not needed. Distracting law-enforcement officials from REAL crime, and CREATING new forms of criminality by means of unneeded new legislation is not what we look to our legislators for at this time, or any other time.

There are serious problems in our state for the legislature to address: raw milk sale is not one of them. For the most part, the dairy farmers and the small population which is devoted to freshly-produced, local milk, have been getting along very well without your help.

I was PARTICULARLY irritated to read the precise rules governing SIGNS you wish posted where raw milk is sold--as if paying more than \$8 a gallon did not inform a consumer that there was something interesting about the milk he was buying!! Recently, I complained to my own state senator about how no statute prevented our Secretary of State from deploying a ballot, on which voters were constrained to make their write-in votes by using a felt-tip marker to write a name, legibly, in a space no bigger than a postage stamp. My senator pooh-pooh'd my complaint as the irate ravings of a "nut." And yet, here is a piece of legislation demanding that oppressive signs be posted, with meticulous attention to paper size, typeface size and color, and other details--where we've managed perfectly well WITHOUT such silliness for years and years!

In conclusion, I wish to urge you to adopt some PRIDE in our agricultural traditions. Here in Connecticut we are blessed to have a combination of excellences: we are next-door to one of the world's largest and most complex metropolises, and yet, close enough to farms to enjoy the freshest possible farm products, from apples and strawberries picked that morning, to creamy milk that was inside of a living, breathing cow--a cow with a NAME, like "Jennifer" or "Bessie!"--only the day before. We should do everything in our power to ensure that, in these difficult times, with everyone suffering from the pressure of economic need, small farmers who take pride in their workmanship and in the excellence of their farms and farm products, are left free to operate and encouraged to retail their products in competition with the giant food industries of our country.

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

I thank the committee for their attention, and urge all of you to withhold your legislative hand from this terrible, terrible extension of governmental power and control: it is not needed, it is not wanted, and we, the milk-drinkers of your state, oppose it vigorously.

Robert S. Kissel
50 Saint-Mihiel Drive
Hamden, Connecticut 06514-3735
(203-387-6661)

To be presented as testimony for bill 6313 and 6312

Dear Members of the Environmental Committee,

My family would like to share some aspects of our life and how access to raw milk is vitally important to our health and well being. I have always enjoyed milk throughout my life, but had to give it up in my early 20's due to severe gastrointestinal distress. What I found was many of my other life-long ailments such as ear infections, dizziness, nausea, and skin problems also magically went away. At the age of 30 I became pregnant with my first child and found myself craving milk but still unable to digest it. I spent many hours researching alternatives to milk (pasteurized). I found that many people unable to digest pasteurized milk had no problems with clean, certified, raw milk. I tried raw milk for the first time during my first pregnancy and found that not only could I digest it, but I could consume large quantities without incident and proceeded to have a very healthy son.

To this day my oldest son has only consumed raw milk. On the occasions he has consumed pasteurized milk he will promptly vomit. At 5 1/2 years old he has only needed medical attention once; last summer due to Lyme's disease. He has completely avoided all the childhood ailments that plagued myself and my husband as children; ear infections, respiratory problems (allergies), etc. My second son at 18 months is also the picture of health. He has never required medical attention with the exception of the few incidents where he has consumed pasteurized milk and within hours becomes a "colicky" baby, with intestinal distress and blood in his stools. These are similar to conditions which seem to affect every one of his cousins on my husband's side. We have completely escaped many of these "hereditary" conditions by avoiding pasteurized milk. If our access to raw milk is hindered, so will be the exceptional health of my family.

Please respect our access to raw milk. We are college educated adults and know the concerns that one might have regarding consuming raw milk. We feel we have all the facts. Those who have concerns should focus on the badly run agribusinesses and not farmers who maintain healthy, natural and humane practices. We know these farmers that sell us raw milk and know they take great care to insure our safety. Please oppose these bills and protect the health of my family and the citizens of CT.

Most Sincerely,

Stephanie Shearer
54 Granite Ave.
Canaan, CT 06018

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To Connecticut State Legislators,

I am writing to express my concern at some of the proposed rule changes for Raw Milk Dairy's in CT as presented in the bill before the legislature, #6312 and #6313. Let me first say that I have been drinking raw milk for over two years at one farm and previously for a year at another farm and have never had any ill effects. I am well aware of the potential risks and make an informed decision to drink raw milk and thank the state of CT for allowing me to make that choice. In fact I believe that it has helped contribute to my overall health. I understand the need to review policies in light of the unfortunate events that occurred at Town Farm Dairy this summer and encourage the state to look closely and respond appropriately. The proposed rule changes that I am concerned about are the restriction of raw milk sales to only on the farm where it is produced and placing the economic burden of testing on the producers. I believe these rules fail to address the problem of potential bacterial contamination of the milk and could hurt families, businesses, and consumers that rely on raw milk.

All food production is fraught with risks and the state must balance the desire for a particular product with the safety of that product. In the last few years bacterial contamination has been found in peanut butter, jalapenos, spinach, and meat. To minimize this risk we have not limited where these products could be sold but introduced improvements in the raising of the products, testing of the products, and educating consumers about how to avoid potential contamination. The proposed warning label seems to address this issue although the wording to be displayed at the stores seems unnecessary and discriminatory towards raw milk. We don't put signs up in front of the vegetables, also meant to be eaten without cooking, that they could be contaminated with harmful bacteria.

Testing milk samples for e-coli and other pathogens seems an appropriate response and I would encourage the state to test all dairy cows as this would help to ensure the health of cows, farms, and people in the state of CT. Bacteria, if in the cows manure not only can be passed through milk but into the soil and water which poses a risk to all residents of CT. However to pass the cost of these tests, specifically the quarterly fecal test on to the producer, many of whom are small businesses, would effectively put them out of business and therefore make it impossible for me to obtain the raw milk I desire. Specifically regarding the proposed quarterly fecal test, from what I understand the test will provide merely a snapshot on that particular day of the cow and give no real indication of the cows overall health or how the farm cares for the cow every day of the year. This makes this fecal test a waste of money and unhelpful in protecting the health of consumers in CT and as I mentioned earlier will effectively put the small farms I rely on out of business. I respectfully request you reconsider the effectiveness and usefulness of this test.

In the years since raw milk has been available in retail stores in CT there have been few incidents of bacterial contamination. Many people believe that raw milk is vital to maintaining their health and will go to many extremes to obtain it, often pushing the issue farther off the radar of the state. Restricting sales of raw milk to on farm sales only will lead to the creation of coops and food buying clubs moving the product out of the retail stores and into the home where it is harder for the state to monitor.

The state has a role to both protect consumers and help encourage business often striking a balance. Passing the costs of testing and restricting sales to on the farm only unfairly hurts farmers whose livelihood depends on raw milk and consumers who desire to drink raw milk while failing to address the problem of potential bacterial contamination. I encourage the state to stay focused on the problem of potential bacterial contamination from cows and not to add extra rules that are costly, unrelated, and unhelpful. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Kirschner
332 Kent Rd S
Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754
860-248-3070

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Environmental Committee,

Please oppose bills 6313-An Act Concerning Raw Milk and 6312-An Act Concerning the Sale of Adulterated Milk and Milk Products. Do not allow them to take away my ability to drink raw milk. Homogenized milk makes me very sick. (This is not an uncommon health problem.) I have been drinking raw milk for years and it does not pose any problems. I urge you to take action and reject these bills.

Thank You,

Sue Good
6 Brookview Ave
Wallingford, CT 06492
Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.

To be presented as testimony for bill 6313 and 6312

Dear Members of the Environmental Committee,

My wife and I made the decision 5-6 years ago to raise our family on raw, unpasteurized milk. This decision was made based on several factors. First, my wife had various ailments throughout her life which most doctors were unable to diagnose and/or treat. I myself was healthy, but had been unable to drink milk in my adult years as it caused fairly serious stomach distress. Through much research, we found information that indicated raw milk may help to alleviate some of our problems. We began drinking raw milk, and indeed found this to be the case. I was able to drink milk with no stomach problems to speak of. Many of the problems my wife had been having (nausea, dizziness, etc.) also cleared up as we continued to drink this food. Based on this, we decided that we would raise our children drinking raw milk as well.

Now my children Tucker and Peter are 5 years and 2 years old respectively. They have been incredibly healthy their whole lives. We live in a neighborhood with many children of the same age. The parents of many of these children, seeing how our boys never got ear infections nor allergies, made the decision to try raw milk for their children and can attest to similar results.

Please understand this was a decision that we did not enter into lightly. We read all the research pro's and con's. We visited farms to see the operations, and how exactly the raw milk was handled. And really, that's what it came down to for us. Seeing a raw milk operation versus a conventional industrial dairy farm and the treatment of the animals. Seeing the direct health benefits enjoyed by family. Getting the thanks from a neighbor who's chronically ear-infected child hadn't had an episode since beginning raw milk. And supporting a local farmer that can use the extra income that raw milk brings in. It all convinced us we made the correct decision.

So in closing, we urge you not to pass these laws which would limit access to our raw milk. One of the reasons we have loved living in CT for the past 6 years is how it seems to embrace traditional agriculture; whether that be the many organic farms, the local farmer's market, or this access to raw milk. Indeed, it's one of the reasons we've chosen to live and raise our family here. Please allow us to continue this by voting down this limitation of our basic rights.

Best Regards,
Todd Shearer
54 Granite Ave
Canaan, CT 06018

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Environmental Committee,

Please oppose bills 6313-An Act Concerning Raw Milk and 6312-An Act Concerning the Sale of Adulterated Milk and Milk Products.

This subject is very important to myself and my family and we would like your support. I urge you to take action and reject these bills. Buying raw milk and aged raw milk cheese is a choice and choice is freedom.

My wife gets very sick from drinking Pasteurized/Homogenized milk. She has no trouble with raw milk, which we have been drinking for years. It is very healthy and tasty. Please help us to keep the freedom to buy raw milk at my local grocery store without any additional cost to the farmers.

To be presented as testimony for bill 6313 and 6312

Thank You for your support,

Kenneth J Good
6 Brookview Ave
Wallingford, CT 06492
ken.good@snet.net

In 1991, I lived at the Abbey of Regina Laudis for a year and participated in their Monastic Internship program, which is one of their education outreach programs. I focused my year there on the dairy and cheesemaking. Therefore I know the health standards at the Abbey and the other small dairies with which they have contact are of the highest level. I have lived in CT and have been drinking raw milk and eating raw milk cheese since then, since 1991, so for 18 years, and never, not once, have I had any health problems related to this.

The new testing requirements exceed those of any other state for such a license. Moreover, making the farmers pay for this testing is excessive and clearly designed not to help small dairies maintain the best health standards possible, but to put them out of business. The result would be that the proposed bill 6313 would eliminate my freedom of choice as a consumer. All of this is appalling and unacceptable.

I am a concerned consumer, seeking the healthiest possible way of living, and my general health has improved through my raw milk consumption because I have a stronger, more natural immune system. I would not force raw milk products on those who do not want them, but I am angered that my choice for them could be taken away.

Please do not support this bill.

Sincerely,

Sydney Palmer, S.T.L.
839 Main Street
Torrington, CT 06790

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To the members of the environmental committee:

I am providing this written testimony in opposition to HB 6312 and HB 6313. We are a small, family farm that is a licensed Grade A raw milk dairy. Our herd consists of 20 milking goats, their kids and two bucks. We built our farm essentially from scratch, at great financial and personal cost. My wife, my retired father and myself run the farm. We all work incredibly hard and take great pride in offering quality, wholesome food to our local community, family and friends. While we offer raw milk to our customers we also sell cheese and soap made from our milk. The price of our milk is high but it barely covers the cost of our certified organic grain, hay and the labor involved with producing Grade A milk on a small scale.

Our customers who have serious food allergies and those that prefer their children be raised on raw milk depend on us to provide clean, wholesome goats' milk which we take pride in doing. We know each and every one of our customers by name as they all enjoy visiting our farm and seeing the animals that produce their milk. If this legislation is passed it will have serious financial consequences that, frankly, our farm simply cannot bear. The fecal testing alone will cost our farm over \$4,000 annually and our glass bottles will need to be reprinted at a cost of almost \$3,000.

Our milk consistently performs to cleanliness standards on par with pasteurized milk and our facilities and animal areas are immaculate. We have no issue with additional testing, but to shoulder the cost is too much. The cost of testing in conjunction with bottle reprinting fees as well as the governors proposed licensing fee hike and finally the inability to sell milk in retail locations will force us to discontinue raw milk sales.

Passing this legislation will reduce the state's income by the reduction in licensing income and will most likely force some if not all the raw milk producers out of business. This will reduce state income further through further licensing reductions and, more importantly, income tax losses from farmers and their employees.

Sincerely,
Kris Noiseux & Annemarie Prause
Meadow Stone Farm
199 Hartford Road
Brooklyn, CT
(860) 617-2982

To be presented as testimony for bill 6313 and 6312

My nephew and his wife have been following the raw milk battle for some time and ask that I please write to request that you vote against any legislation making it difficult for local farmers to sell raw milk. It is totally safe to drink raw milk. Pasteurized milk is missing many nutrients that we need. Plus, we need to make it easier for Connecticut and New England farmers to make a living and sell their products, not more difficult.

Thank you.
Mary Crombie Geer
86 Sunset Drive, Glastonbury, CT 06033

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Hello,

My name is Anne Kelly and I am a mother of 4 from Goshen. I became aware of the benefits of raw foods in general, and raw milk in particular after reading the book Nourishing Traditions. The book explained why my kids reacted badly to nursing when I had conventional milk in my diet, and brought to light the dangers of substituting soy milk. We were living in Massachusetts at the time, and the closest source of raw milk was 45 minutes away, and only available two days a week during certain hours if you brought your own bottles. Imagine my delight upon moving to Goshen, truly the land of milk and honey. Here raw milk is 10 minutes down the road, and available for sale at many local markets and health food stores. Now it is the only milk my family will drink, and we enjoy it in many forms: yogurt, kefir, cheese. This milk has all the goodness that nature intends us mammals to have. We can digest it and it has more nutrients available to grow healthy kids. Serving my family raw milk has never been an issue. My husband Mike is a physician who extolls the benefits of raw milk. He believes that the dangers of drinking it are greatly overstated, and points out that as recently as last winter there were cases of illness and deaths in Massachusetts associated with the consumption of pasteurized milk. Our local farmers are meticulous in their practices, and have baffled curious experimenters who fail to produce bacteria after days of leaving the milk out to "clabber." We take milk in coolers for a week of camping, and it stays fresh! It is an amazing product, to which pasteurized milk cannot hold a candle.

It is a sad commentary for Connecticut that this legislation is being proposed by the Department of Agriculture. Shame on the Aggies for not supporting small local farmers. These farms operate on very tight margins, and are already struggling to stay afloat. Many will be hurt, and the expensive testing required by the bills will put many out of business. We will also lose the seasonal produce and other local meat products that these farmers offer to supplement milk sales. Because of all of these factors, the bills will ultimately serve to limit the freedom of choice for consumers here who are looking for local and healthful alternatives to the "food" available in conventional supermarkets.

Connecticut needs to rethink all of this regulation and let consumers decide. We as a state need to support local and diverse small farms, and become self reliant food producers. If we only end up with a few mono-culture factory farms in the state, our great farming tradition will become a thing of the past. This legislation puts us right on that slippery slope. Please do not support these bills, thereby supporting our local agricultural tradition.

Thank you,
Anne Kelly
Goshen, CT

Dear Legislators,

I have been purchasing Raw Milk from Meadow Ridge Farm in Litchfield, CT for over a year. It is wonderful milk and I ask you to not put a stop to the sale of raw milk in Connecticut Retail Stores.

Thank you,
Diane White
32 Beach St
Goshen, CT 06756

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Members of the Environment Committee:

I am writing to stand in strong opposition to the onerous provisions in the draft versions of An Act Concerning Raw Milk (6313) and An Act Concerning the Sale of Adulterated Milk and Milk Products (6312).

I am a consumer of raw milk and an avid supporter of growing our local, small scale food production as an alternative to factory farming and importing food from long distances. The ability of our small but growing corps of small scale raw milk producers to meet a growing consumer demand for clean, quality raw milk is threatened by these bills. As an urban planner, I see the direct relationship between viable farms and preservation of open space.

I grew up on a dairy farm in Wallingford, Connecticut and drank nothing but raw milk from my father's cows for my entire childhood. My father, George Farnam, was a dairy industry leader (President of the Connecticut Milk for Health and a Director of the Connecticut Milk Producers' Association and the American Dairy Association) and member of the Legislature (1956-58). Out of dedication to preserving agriculture in Connecticut he was one of the first farmers to enter his land into the farmland preservation program at significant personal sacrifice.

I am a consumer of raw milk who strongly supports the right of our farmers to produce and sell their product without the sales restrictions and overly onerous testing requirements in these bills that would put their very existence at risk. For the past nine months I have been regularly purchasing raw Jersey milk from Deerfield Farm in Durham both at the farm and at retail outlets. At the New Haven Farmer's Market I patronize the delicious locally produced cheeses produced by Beltane Farms in Lebanon. I understand that farms selling raw milk are already subject to an extra level of regulation that is protecting public health. It is important the informed consumers retain the right to purchase these excellent, healthy products without the unnecessary price increases and more restrictive availability that these bills would cause.

When these bills were proposed, I conducted an extensive search of the Internet, reviewing both pro-and anti-raw milk articles and web sites. After this thorough review, I firmly believe that raw milk is safe for my family and more nutritionally beneficial than standard milk. There will always be risks of pathogens in our food supply, but based on what I have read the risk from well-managed raw milk producing dairy farms is smaller than for other food products.

I urge you to reject these bills in their entirety and instead direct the Department of Agriculture to work with our raw milk producers to expand their markets and continuously improve their management practices to ensure that they not only survive but thrive.

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of Connecticut residents and for listening today to the those who strongly support the availability of raw milk.

Sincerely,

James B. Farnam
86 Cottage Street
New Haven, CT 06511

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: CT Department of Agriculture Proposed Bill Concerning Raw Milk

Dear Senator Prague,

Please be aware of a proposed Department of Agriculture bill that is soon to cross your desk concerning the raw milk and aged raw milk cheese producers of Connecticut. This subject is very important to me and I would like your support. As a supporter of your office, I urge you to take action and reject this bill. Buying raw milk and aged raw milk cheese is a choice and choice is a freedom. Please help us to keep the freedom to buy raw milk at my local grocery store *without* any additional cost to the farmers.

I have been drinking Connecticut raw, unpasteurized, un-homogenized grass-fed milk sold over-the-counter for over six years. I drink over a gallon a week and believe that the health benefits of raw milk are synonymous with my longevity. Among other health benefits I believe raw milk has, here are the important ones:

- Grass-fed raw milk is loaded with processed chlorophyll, enzymes and conjugated linoleic acid, which I believe are potent natural cancer-fighting agents.
- Pasteurization kills all bacteria, including beneficial bacteria. I would like to continue to drink raw milk as sold at my local stores to harvest the benefits of beneficial bacteria.
- Homogenization changes the physical makeup of milk, thus I believe renders it harmful to the body, especially the arteries of the heart. I would like to continue to drink raw milk to avoid these qualities.
- Decades ago, The Weston A. Price Foundation (www.realmilk.com) started A Campaign for Real Milk, a movement to educate the public on the benefits of raw milk. Surely this scientific knowledge cannot be ignored.

Please do not deny my right to these natural benefits. Please reject the bill. If you have any questions on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,
Michael D. Feeney
88 Leonard Bridge Road
Lebanon, CT 06249
feendog333@gmail.com
(860) 228-3364

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

To Whom it May Concern,

Thank you for your attention to this letter. As a constituent in Middletown, your service to the Connecticut State Legislature on my behalf is something I value. Therefore, I am writing to you to request that you /do not/ support the acts regarding Raw Milk being presented.

Legislation regarding food consumption should have as its primary goals the protection of citizens from negligence, their right to choose foodstuff they feel best suits them and the well-being of food producers. This is not generally the case. Through their lobbies, large agribusinesses have made it impossible for consumers to decide what's best for them and have deterred small farmers from maintaining the financial stability to stay in business. The proposed act will severely limit the ability of the engaged consumer to purchase products which they /rely/ upon for their nutrition, and will prohibit our farmers from keeping their livelihoods. The current legislation acknowledges that less than half of one percent of milk purchased in Connecticut is raw retail milk. Many farmers and their families will suffer irreparable financial damage without serious changes to the current legislation.

Please help us keep the freedom to purchase raw milk with no additional burden upon our farmers. Perhaps a different type of bill or regulation, written in consultation with raw milk farmers would be more appropriate. Food choice is a freedom that should be promoted and protected by legislation. I urge you not to support proposed legislation, but to continue support our freedom to choose.

Sincerely Yours,

Sarah-Jane Ripa
19 Johnson Street
Middletown, CT 06457
Tel: (646) 523-0868
Email: sripa@wesleyan.edu

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to you regarding bills 6312, 6313 and 5504. Certainly many people have contacted you regarding how important raw milk and cheese is and how raw milk has benefited them and their health. Although it is an important part of my life and I have benefited from it health wise, I will not be discussing that with you in this letter.

Connecticut is my home and I have lived here for 38 years and plan to live here for the rest of my life. My ideals and values do not necessarily coincide with everyone that lives in our fine state, but each person has the freedom to be who and what they are.

Small businesses are an important part of this state and it is in the best interest of our legislators to help them whenever it is possible; otherwise we will be left with a state of casinos, big box stores and chain restaurants. There will no longer be any pride of the great heritage of Connecticut if we cut out all of the truly hard working small businesses that make this state unique.

The small raw milk dairy farmers need to be supported and encouraged to continue processing in this state. The legislation in bill 6313 limiting sales to only the farms will cut their business between 30 and 100 percent depending on the farm. How would Wal-Mart continue to do business if their sales were cut to that extreme? They would not.

There are no guarantees on anything in life. We all take chances from the moment our feet hit the floor in the morning. It's part of life, it's part of living in a free country. The proposed testing in bill 6313 will surely put the raw milk and raw milk cheese producers out of business. This testing exceeds all other states and does NOT ensure the safety of one person. By the time the test results have been read, the milk has already been sold and drunk. Safety is NOT behind this legislation. This is a strategic move to cripple these farmers financially. Again, there are no guarantees on anything in life, but if there were a bacterial outbreak in Connecticut raw milk, the good news is that because raw milk sales are localized, it would be easy to contain, inform and recall. We can guarantee that there will be no need to recall these products from other countries as they are now doing for peanut butter! The testing as written in 6313 could cost as much as \$16,000 yearly for a particular farm. The cost was figured by the number of cows on the farm. Connecticut raw milk producers have a very good record. The case of Town Farm Dairy is the exception to the rule. You must know that it was not a privately owned dairy, and the proper labeling of their milk has been questioned. Please do not punish our raw milk dairy farmers and push them out of business because of the unique circumstances at Town Farm Dairy that has now gone out of business.

Your support of rewriting bill 5504 is requested as well. 5504 will basically overwrite 6313 in the effect that the small retailers that sell raw milk will not be able to pay this outrageous license fee and therefore raw milk would mostly have to be sold on the farms, therefore cutting the raw milk dairy farmers business by 30-100% as stated above. Please rewrite the bill and allow retailers that sell less than 100 gallons a day be exempt. \$500 is the minimum fee of 5504 and is very far from the \$30 they are currently paying. Let the big retailers pay the fees. It will not mean nearly as much to their bottom line.

Let me end with this thought; *the founder of Connecticut, Thomas Hooker gave an important speech in 1638. In the speech he stated that the people should rule the government rather than the government ruling the people.* Please hear what the people have to say and reject the legislation in 6313 that limits sales to the farms, increases testing, and a skull and crossbones poster at the milk coolers. Also, reject the legislation in 6312 that could lead to a class A misdemeanor. Adding the sale of adulterated milk and milk products to the list of violent crimes of class A misdemeanors does not make any sense. And lastly, rewrite bill 5504 and make the small retailers exempt from the increase in the dairy license fee.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your reply concerning this letter,
Heather Bunnell Thibeault
16 Blissville Road
Lisbon, CT 06351
860-859-9480