

TO: CT Legislators

FR: Jennifer Finlayson- consumer and supporter of local agriculture

RE: Protection of Private Citizens Rights and the Rights of Small Farmers/ Bill 6313

#4000

Recently a proposal, bill 6313, concerning raw dairy in CT has been recommended on behalf of the DOAG by the Milk Regulation Board. It seeks to restrict the sale of raw dairy products to the farm and farm markets only and to require additional testing at added cost to the farmer. These costs would average \$1100 per animal and are financially inhibitive. Upon information obtained from veterinarians and labs that would conduct such tests, it is agreed that this series of proposed tests are inconclusive. We all want clean milk. Regulating small raw dairies out of business will not achieve this.

More than 40 farmers, raw dairy consumers and concerned citizens gathered at the meeting of the Milk Regulation Board in support of defending our right to drink, purchase and sell raw milk on Wednesday Jan 21, 2009. Two testimonies were given in objection. The Department of Health's testimony was particularly inflammatory, citing opinion and cultural bias in lieu of actual research. I encourage you to look at the actual data by referencing *The Untold Story of Milk*, Dr. Ron Schmit (CT doctor and author) and www.realmilk.org. Testimonies included a variety of grounded reasons to thwart this bill including political, economic, scientific and health related. I strongly encourage you to review the transcripts of the public comment portion of 1/21/09's meeting.

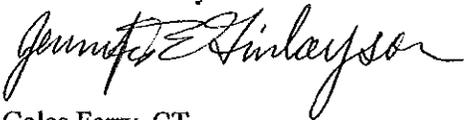
According to due process, the recommendation for this to be submitted as a bill is subject to public comment. The proposed DOAG bill recommendation via the Milk Regulatory Board was only discovered by happenstance. There was never a formal posting or comment period. At minimum, via Roberts Rules, the actual committee needs to vote for its submission. Commissioner Perilli, in a unilateral decision- greatly influenced by the DOAG, has moved the proposition forward- without even the knowledge of his own board. Commissioner Perilli began the raw milk portion of the meeting by stating that the testimony given today would be taken into account in the Milk Regulation Board's decision whether or not to recommend it as a bill. Only at (after) this meeting, due to another line of questioning, did those assembled- including members of the milk regulation board, find out that the recommendation had already been submitted.

Whether you choose to exercise your right to drink raw dairy or not, it is (at present) your right. That right, to purchase and consume a clean, healthy whole food, is being legislated away in a manner that epitomizes the underbelly of politics. As a public servant, entrusted by the electorate, I am certain that this is neither a practice you wish to allow nor to be associated with via your inactivity.

People who have been appointed to preserve the rule of law are dismantling a community of tax paying, politically active, hard working citizens. The effects of such egregious behavior are pervasive. To forget where we have come from is to destroy our future. The PR department of the DOAG would have us believe that CT is doing all it can to preserve our agrarian roots. The Legislation would have us believe that it supports the small business owner. This action is contrary to both.

Our family has personally witnessed improved physical conditions from the many health benefits of raw dairy. It is such a vital part of our nutritional needs that if it cannot be purchased in CT I will have travel to MA. It is *that* important. Many consumers of raw dairy feel the same. How sad that we would treat our farmers with such disregard. And yet even more, how foolish in these difficult economic times to drive small farms out of business and send our commerce dollars out of state. Again, I encourage you to look into the facts behind raw milk. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Jennifer E. Finlayson



Gales Ferry, CT