



To: Environment Committee

From: Jennifer McTiernan H., Executive Director, CitySeed

Re: 6313 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING RAW MILK and 6312 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF ADULTERATED MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

Date: February 8, 2009

I am submitting this written testimony to strongly urge the Environment Committee to defeat both bills 6313 and 6312, which represent excessive regulation of raw milk. Through the imposition of excessive regulations, these bills would take the decision of whether or not to purchase raw milk or raw milk products out of the hands of consumers and into the hands of government officials without a clear benefit to public health and the public health code.

CitySeed is a non-profit organization that operates a network of farmers' markets in the City of New Haven and seeks to promote increased access to local, healthy food and farm viability. During the 2008 market season, City Farmers' Markets redeemed over \$78,500 in WIC and Food Stamps from New Haven residents who are most nutritionally at-risk. In addition, these four, outdoor markets contributed over \$1.75 million to the local economy. Raw milk is for sale at these markets by producers who are properly licensed. Market consumers have the option to purchase raw milk or not – and are able to read the warning label and determine for themselves whether or not they would like to make the purchase. In effect, these bills would unnecessarily take the decision out of the hands of consumers and into the hands of government officials.

Since there is certainly a benefit to public health if *all* of the food we consume is traceable to its source, there would be a benefit to ensuring traceability of raw milk. This issue could easily be solved, however, by adding regulations that would not be nearly as burdensome as these two bills propose. For example, a year or two ago, the legislature passed a bill that regulated the traceability of locally grown fruits and vegetables sold to restaurants (Public Act 06-52). This approach is certainly a good model to follow. If the goal is to make raw milk more traceable, there are more prudent courses of action than these two bills, which would result in excessive regulations to the detriment of the consumer and the farms that produce raw milk. I therefore urge you to defeat both of these bills. Thank you for your time and consideration!