



CONNECTICUT  
FARMLAND  
T R U S T  
PRESERVING WORKING LANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

TO: Members of the Environment Committee

FROM: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director

DATE: March 16, 2009

RE: **Testimony in support of RB #1082: An Act Concerning the Preservation of State-Owned Agricultural Land.**

I am writing to express the Connecticut Farmland Trust's support for RB #1082, "An Act Concerning the Preservation of State-Owned Agricultural Land. The Connecticut Farmland Trust is the state's only private, non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to the preservation of working farmland. We hold agricultural conservation easements on privately owned farms and assist farm families throughout the process of protecting their land. The Trust is a member of the Working Lands Alliance.

The Connecticut Farmland Trust wholeheartedly supports authorizing The Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to conduct a review of the state-owned agricultural land and to make recommendations to permanently protect these properties for agriculture. In 1978 the State Purchase of Development Rights Program was created with the goal of protecting 130,000 acres. To date, less than 35,000 acres have been protected by the state program. The state-owned agricultural land that is appropriate for preservation should be permanently protected using an appropriate method that ensures preservation in perpetuity. These lands could then be added to the protected farmland totals for the state. During these times of extremely tight budget constraints, this represents a way for the State of CT to protect farmland without an impact on the state budget.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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