



To: Committee on General Law

From: Jennifer McTiernan H., Executive Director, CitySeed

Re: Bill No. 926 (RAISED) An Act Concerning the Sale of Connecticut Wine at Farmers' Markets.

Date: February 24, 2009

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I am submitting this written testimony to strongly urge the Committee on General Law to support this act and permit Connecticut farm wineries to sell Connecticut wine at farmers' markets. As the Executive Director of CitySeed, I can attest to the strong community interest in local food and farm products, including wine, as well as the positive benefit farmers' markets have on community development, local economic development and farm viability.

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. The most successful markets are those that offer the greatest variety of Connecticut grown and produced farm products. Wine would be an outstanding addition to the farmers' market. Customers would enjoy purchasing local wines and supporting farm wineries in their state. Also, this product is available year-round, which would be a boon to markets, like ours, that operate year-round. Along similar lines, the most successful farmers are those that diversify their product lines and are entrepreneurial in their approach to doing so. Farm wineries are one of the best examples of entrepreneurialism and should be rewarded for their innovative strategies for diversifying their bottom lines.

The time for this bill is right now. Farmers' markets are thriving and greatly benefitting communities and Connecticut's agricultural base. Being able to offer Connecticut wine for sale at markets would only make markets more effective at connecting market-goers to the sources of their sustenance and introducing them to the bounty of Connecticut's farms. In closing, I enthusiastically hope you will support Bill No. 926. Thank you for your time and consideration.