



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 12, 2010  
  
RE: **Testimony on RB #5419**

I am writing to express Connecticut Farmland Trust's support for RB #5419 "An Act Concerning Farms, Food and Jobs."

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. CFT is a member of the Working Lands Alliance coalition.

Connecticut's small farms play a key role in forming the character and history of our communities and bring local food from the state's rich soil to our plates. They are worth the state's investment in their preservation. Currently the state Farmland Preservation Program has a minimum size limit of 30 acres of cropland, meaning that farms smaller than 30 acres typically cannot participate. However, in Connecticut, small farms are very common (62% of Connecticut's farms are less than 50 acres). RB #5419 provides for a separate source of funding for The Community Farms Program that will allow smaller farms to be protected as well.

The existing Farmland Preservation Program, even with its current limits, has more demand for its services than it can fully meet. This independent arrangement will prevent small and large farms from competing with each other for dollars to purchase development rights.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Henry N. Talmage  
Connecticut Farmland Trust