

TOWN OF DURHAM

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

LAURA L. FRANCIS



To: Public Health Committee

Re: H.B. No. 5446 (3/12/10 Agenda Item #8)
S.B. No. 428 (3/12/10 Agenda Item #9)

Testimony – Laura L. Francis, First Selectman of Durham

The Town of Durham has been home to the Durham Fair for 93 years. It is a continuing source of pride, a tribute to our heritage, and a staple of our town. The Durham Agricultural Fair Association is a generous benefactor of our community and the annual fair is a source of revenue for many of our local non-profit organizations.

The Durham Fair Association, the Town of Durham, the Connecticut State Police and local emergency responders meet every year to create a responsible health and safety plan to ensure compliance with all state and local statutes and regulations. Much of what occurs on the fairgrounds is regulated to a certain degree. Prior to the passage of Public Act 09-232 however, the annual Durham Fair did not fall under the mass gathering statutes that have been in effect since sometime in the 1970's – a statute that we found to be somewhat outdated and inapplicable to the operation of agricultural fairs as well as difficult for the town to enforce.

I have worked closely with the Department of Public Health, Senator Meyer, Representative Lesser, representatives of the Durham Fair Agricultural Association and Chiefs of Service to craft an amendment to CGS 19a-443. We have reached an agreement that the proposed changes are acceptable and in fact, would make compliance achievable, while creating higher standards for the safety planning process.

I appreciate your consideration of the proposed legislative changes outlined in the H.B. No. 5446 and S.B. No. 428 and urge your support. Please know that I share your concern for the safety of our shared constituents. I believe the proposals under your consideration are effective and responsible.

Laura L. Francis