



CT NOFA
Cultivating an Organic Connecticut

To: The Appropriations Committee

Re: Sweep of CIA funds in Governor's March 1, 2010 Deficit Mitigation Plan

From: Bill Duesing, Executive Director, CT NOFA

Date: March 10, 2010

This testimony is presented on behalf of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut's nearly 800 members who see Connecticut agriculture and a vibrant local food system as essential for a healthy future. Since 1982, CT NOFA has been educating and advocating for local and organic agriculture.

In these challenging times, Connecticut agriculture is one of the bright spots. Over the past ten years there has been a remarkable growth in interest and participation in local agriculture and food and farm projects in our state. The growth of farmland preservation, small farms, community farms, farmers' markets, community food projects, farm-to-school, to-chef and to-plate programs and many more aspects of the growing, vibrant Connecticut food system has been remarkable and very heartening.

The dedicated funding stream that the Community Investment Act brings for farmland preservation, for staff at the Department of Agriculture, for Agriculture Viability Grants, for the CT Grown marketing program and for the CT Farm Link program provides important support for the amazing grassroots growth of Connecticut's local food economy. The Agriculture Viability grants in particular have funded a large number of innovative on farm, non-profit and public projects which are critical as we move into the future. Agriculture is essential for Connecticut. It is not optional if we want to eat healthy fresh food and protect our environment.

We are aware that the CIA funding stream also supports affordable housing, historic preservation and open space protection, all of which are also important for the quality of life in Connecticut.

For the health of Connecticut, we urge this committee to reject the sweep of CIA funds for budget mitigation.