

Connecticut State Grange

**TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT STATE GRANGE
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL NO. 5419
AN ACT CONCERNING FARMS, FOOD AND JOBS**

MARCH 12, 2010

I am Gordon Gibson of Vernon, Legislative Director for the Connecticut State Grange. I am speaking today on behalf of the nearly 4,000 Grange members throughout Connecticut in support of Raised Bill 5410, An Act Concerning Farms, Food and Jobs.

The Department of Agriculture is trying to preserve active farmland in Connecticut, but its limited resources of staff and funds must concentrate on the larger farms. The Department will not consider the preservation of farms containing 30 acres or less of important farmland. However, the USDA Census of Agriculture reports that 40% of the active farms in Connecticut contain 50 acres or less. These small farms are also small businesses that provide jobs, increase our local food security and provide much of the rural charm that makes Connecticut an attractive state in which to live and work.

Raised Bill 5419 would provide funding to protect and preserve these small farms that are an important part of our economy. This funding could be leverage with matching federal funding so that for every dollar invested by the State another matching dollars could be obtained from community and federal funds.

Other provisions of Raised Bill 5419 would do much to increase the opportunities for the smaller farms in Connecticut to be economically viable operations. The Grange therefore urges the General Assembly to pass Raised Bill 5419.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Gordon F. Gibson, Legislative Director
Connecticut State Grange
836 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon CT 06066
860-871-7757
gfgibson@aol.com