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March 12, 2010

**Testimony in support of:**

**HB 5420 AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSITION FROM THE TEN MIL PROGRAM IN 2011**

Submitted by Steven K. Reviczky, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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*The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farmers and the future of Connecticut agriculture.*

Senator Edward Meyer, Representative Richard Roy and members of the Environment Committee:

HB 5420 provides a window from October 1, 2011 for 10 mill forest landowners to transfer their properties without penalty into the PA 490 program. HB 5420 would also allow 10 mill forest landowners the opportunity to sell or donate their properties for conservation without penalty.

Forest landowners currently under the 10 mill program are slated to realize a significant increase in the assessed value of their forest land above and beyond what the current land use assessment is for land classified under PA 490 Forest Land. Without the opportunity to transition into the PA 490 program, the only option of relief from a significantly higher tax bill for these forest landowners may be to sell their land.

Fragmentation of forest land is the single largest threat to this valuable resource in Connecticut. HB 5420 will assure that there is an opportunity to preserve this precious resource under a sustainable tax structure afforded by PA 490.

Connecticut Farm Bureau urges support of this bill to protect and preserve significant Connecticut forest land resources that are currently taxed under the 10 mil program.