



Conservation and Development Budget before the Appropriations Committee
February 24, 2011

Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Senator Duff and Representative Hulburt and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Lucy Nolan and I am the executive director of End Hunger Connecticut!, a statewide anti-hunger and food security organization. In that position I sit on the Farmland Preservation Board, and the Milk Promotion Board as a representative for the low-income food insecure and consumers in the state.

I am here tonight urge your support for the Governor's budget proposal in regards to the Department of Agriculture. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture supports many initiatives that help people eat healthy and nutritious foods and administers federal programs that get food to people.

- WIC Farmer's Market Coupons allow those accessing the WIC program to use coupons at area Farmer's Markets and supermarkets for fresh fruits and vegetables. These coupons are a source of income for many of the state's farmers.
- Senior Farmer's Market Coupons provide low-income seniors with coupons for eligible foods at Farmer's Markets and community supported agriculture programs.
- Farm to School programs increase our children's knowledge of locally grown foods and give them the opportunity to taste foods with their peers, increasing the chance that they will try the food. The program provides fresh fruits and vegetables in our elementary schools.

These programs are funded with federal funds as well, bringing in additional funds to the state with their use.

The Farmer's Market coupons are very successful. Last year, the two programs had a redemption rate of 85%. This is especially impressive as the coupons were delivered late due to a problem with the printing. These are important programs for the two groups that they serve: the elderly and the very young and their mothers. For some, these coupons allow them to get out and go to the Farmer's Markets to buy foods that they may not ordinarily be able to afford.

I also want to urge your support of Connecticut's farmland preservation, Connecticut Grown and dairy initiatives. These programs are very important for our quality of life in Connecticut, and in many ways help with our food security ensuring that there is locally grown, safe food in case of an unforeseen emergency. All of these programs combined create avenues for our citizens to access locally grown healthful foods that not only help with our state's overall health, but with the economic livelihood of our farmers as well.

Thank you.