

TESTIMONY OF KATHY DUNAI CONCERNING HB6156

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HEARING - JANUARY31, 2011

My name is Kathy Dunai and I am a 3rd generation farmer on our family farm located in West Suffield. Together with my sister and my two daughters, I currently participate in the Farmers Markets in the towns of Suffield and Collinsville CT.

I would like to interject my strong sense of support and ask for your support concerning HB06156 the portability of a Food Service Permits from Health District to Health District. Three years ago I built a farm store that contains a "certified kitchen" on our family farm located in West Suffield.

Currently, we grow fruits and vegetables on my family's former dairy farm that has transitioned into a small CSA that is also making jams, jelly, pickles and a bakery that makes pies, breads, muffins and various other items also known as value added.

In building my facility, I conformed to all of the necessary health requirements as determined by North Central Health District in Enfield CT as well as all bakery requirements set forth by the Department of Consumer Protection for the State of CT.

This was a very lengthy and very expensive process that cost us several thousand dollars. My unique situation is that participating in the Suffield Farmers Market; I conform to my health district mandates, rules and permits.

When I attend the Collinsville Farmers Market, I fall in the jurisdiction of the Farmington Valley Health District.

Although the Farmington Valley Health District is very supportive of local farmers and supports farmers markets, they do have their own set of rules and requirements.

For example: if I am to sample my products within that district it will cost me an additional \$100.00 for that specific market for the season which covers June to October.

Hypothetically if I were to attend 2 to 3 more markets within that Health District, I would be charged \$100.00 for each market that we attend.

Thus, I not only pay for my space at a farmers market on a seasonal basis which can be quite costly, but now have an additional charge that must be paid to the local health department because I have crossed that invisible county health district line.

It is frustrating to me that this charge is not levied against the farmer who may be next to me at the market sampling their produce if he/she is from the greater Farmington Valley Area.

With that said, at this time I would strongly urge you to support HB06156 for farmers like myself and I family that are directly affected by this situation.

Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any questions for you concerning this matter.

Thank you in advance for your support

Kathy Dunai