

Testimony To The Environmental Committee: HB 6262 An Act Concerning the  
Community Investment Account:

Matthew R. Peckham  
Elm Farm LLC  
Woodstock CT.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Environmental Committee. My name is Matthew Peckham. I am a sixth generation dairy farmer from Woodstock. My wife and I have four children aging from nine years old down to one. We have a milking herd of 140 cows, and farm over 300 acres. Our farm has been recognized as a Connecticut Dairy of Distinction, and we have received the Connecticut Century Farm Award.

Today I am testifying that we need to continue the funding for the Community Investment Act. Connecticut's dairy farmers have been given a much needed lifeline through the Dairy Subsidy provided by this act. The milk checks which Connecticut's farmers will be receiving this spring are going to be quickly eroded by extremely high prices for fuel, grain and fertilizer. The price of fertilizer is tied to fuel due to it's methods of production, and as we all know in the age of ethanol, cow grain now follows the pricing of gasoline.

It is likely going to be many years before Washington is able to provide America's small family dairy farms with a pricing formula that eliminates the extreme market swings which we have been facing since 2006. In the past couple of years New England has seen many small farms disappear. Connecticut dairymen are thankful for the subsidy provided by the CIA act, and we are asking you to please consider the positive effect this distribution has on the overall agricultural economy of the state.

Connecticut's dairy farms, as a \$1.1 billion dollar industry return much of their revenue to the local economy. Looking at our own figures we return more than half of our own milk check back Connecticut's businesses. I also think it is safe to say that Connecticut's Dairy industry is the backbone of the state's overall agribusiness. Due to the fact that we raise both cows and crops means we are supporting suppliers from seed and fertilizer sales to large animal veterinarians. There is no portion of Connecticut's supporting agribusinesses that are not relying on dairy farmers for the bread and butter portion of their income. Therefore any distribution made to my family goes far beyond keeping food on the table for my wife and I and our four children. The community investment act truly invests in many different areas of our community.

In conclusion I'd like to thank you all for the support you have offered in recent years to our farm families. This session, please support HB 6262. It will mean a lot to me to see my children have the opportunity to run our farm as the next generation of Connecticut dairy farmers.

Matthew R. Peckham  
137 Dugg Hill Rd  
Woodstock CT 06281

If you have any comments I can be reached at 860-933-5820.