



Gus Schumacher, Chairman
Michel Nischan, President/CEO

February 22, 2011

Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: H.B. 5376 Bonding for the Community Farms Preservation Program

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and Members of the Environment Committee:

We are writing to support H.B. 5376 for bond funding to the Community Farms Preservation Program over the next two years. Wholesome Wave is committed to the mission of supporting farmers and farm viability by promoting access to fresh, healthful, local fruits and vegetables for underserved communities. H.B. 5376 is critical to protecting the farms that are important to Connecticut communities.

In a state where total cropland decreased by 6,987 acres from 2002 to 2007, the Community Farms Preservation Program can protect farms that are too small to be covered by the Farmland Preservation Program. The Farmland Preservation Program does not include farms that are less than the 30-acre threshold or not in a cluster of farmland. In Connecticut, 64% of farms are less than 50 acres, so the protection afforded by the Community Farms Preservation Program is quite significant. Additionally, with the strong demand for the Farmland Preservation Program, H.B. 5376 creates an opportunity for community and small farms that do qualify to be preserved – but not at the expense of or in competition with protection of larger parcels.

We witness an increased demand for local food products every day in our work throughout the state, including sites in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain and Norwalk. Through our network, we work with small farmers throughout the state who are in need of additional security that this program would provide. It is from this perspective we respectfully urge you to support H.B. 5376.

Sincerely,

Gus Schumacher
Executive Vice President, Policy

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