

Testimony presented to the Joint Committee on Energy and Technology of  
The Connecticut General Assembly  
By the Connecticut Department of Agriculture

2/10/11

**P.B. 634 AAC FARM METHANE RESOURCES**  
**P.B. 5846 AAC ENERGY GENERATION FROM ORGANIC REFUSE**

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture supports the development of alternative energy sources derived from what have been traditionally known as “waste” products. Anaerobic digesters offer Connecticut farmers opportunities to address some of the manure management challenges faced by livestock farms, including manure odor and nutrient availability for the crops they need to grow to feed their animals.

A feed in tariff is a policy mechanism designed to encourage the adoption of renewable energy sources and to help accelerate the move toward grid parity. Under a feed in tariff, eligible renewable energy generators (which can include homeowners and businesses) are paid a premium price for any renewable electricity they produce. This ability to command a premium price for the alternative energy is crucial in making a methane system financially viable. The first form of feed in tariff was implemented in the United States in 1978.

While the technology for farm based methane production has been around for two decades, economics and resistance from the utility industry have inhibited all but a few Connecticut farmers from transforming their waste products into electricity. According to a 2008 study, collected by the *Science and Children* magazine, methane biogas from cow manure would be sufficient to produce 100 billion kilowatt hours, enough to power millions of homes across America. The Department supports P.B. 634 AN ACT CONCERNING FARM METHANE RESOURCES to help facilitate the development of alternative energy resources.

Biogas, which includes methane, is produced by anaerobic digestion or fermentation of biomass, green waste, plant material, energy crops as well as other biodegradable materials. During the process, an air tight tank transforms biomass waste into methane producing renewable energy. The Department of Agriculture supports the concept of establishing a pilot program to determine the feasibility of deriving methane gas from organic refuse from nonlandfill sources. Consequently, the Department supports P.B. 5846 AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY GENERATION FROM ORGANIC REFUSE.

Thank you for your consideration.