



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
775 Bloomfield Ave., Windsor, CT 06095-2322
(860) 768-1100 • Fax (860) 768-1108 •
www.cfba.org

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Testimony in Support of:

H.B. 5470 AN ACT CONCERNING LOCAL PLANS OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by: Donald Tuller, President, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Steve Cassano, Representative Linda Gentile and members of the Planning and Development Committee:

H.B. 5470 is a result of a proposal put forth by the Connecticut Farm Bureau Association Right to Farm Committee which focused on land use legislation. It's passage will result in requiring that when local planning commissions update their plans of conservation and development, that they recommend ways to preserve agricultural land and resources

Municipal plans of conservation and development are the foundation by which land use regulations and planning is built. Agriculture has long been recognized as an important component to maintaining rural character, open space, wildlife habitat and most importantly, a local food source. In addition, there is the benefit that the community realizes, by keeping agricultural land out of residential development, with the increased municipal infrastructure costs that such development creates in excess of the tax base growth also created. It is in every ones best interest to keep this land in agricultural production. Connecticut agriculture contributed \$3.5 billion dollars and 20,000 jobs to the state in 2007. The face of Connecticut agriculture is changing. Farms are getting smaller and more diverse. Connecticut is experiencing an exciting resurgence in the demand for locally grown foods and a renewed interest on the state and municipal level to protect working farms. This resurgence must be supported by a favorable municipal regulatory climate that supports local agriculture.

Connecticut Farm Bureau urges your support of H.B. 5470.