



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

February 9, 2010

Testimony in Opposition to:

COMMITTEE BILL 58 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FEE FOR THE USE OF PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS AT GROCERY AND RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS

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 Meyer, Representative Roy, and Members of the Environment Committee

It is difficult to understand how this proposed Legislation will affect Connecticut Farmers. Are farm stands and farmers markets considered grocery or retail establishments? If they are, and subject to the provisions of this legislation, locally grown produce, that is not prepackaged in plastic, will be more likely to face the additional fee. Farmers that participate in Farmers Markets are essentially selling everything at the point of sale, so all produce bags they provide will trigger a charge. In the current retail environment, meat, fish, and poultry are bagged at the counter-the point of sale- to prevent juice from leaking onto items that might not be fully cooked before consuming. Charging a fee for those bags will encourage consumers to cross contaminate their food purchases. How far away do the produce bags need to be from the point of sale to not be subject to the fee? We use foil bags for frozen items. Are they included in this legislation, or are they excluded? It is quite interesting, that as a seller of some goods that trigger our state sales tax, I am already forced to collect taxes for the state without compensation. This proposed legislation does one better, it forced me to charge my customer a fee, for a bag that I supply as a courtesy, and send that in to the state, again with no compensation. As a farmer that lives one town away from the state line, I do think that you will encourage a consumer backlash, that those that live close to the borders of our state who already travel across state lines to but less expensive gasoline, will do their grocery shopping there too. Are you really sure that you want to do this?

Thank you for your consideration. Don Tuller Connecticut Farm Bureau Association