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January 30, 2013

**Testimony in Opposition to:**

**S.B. No. 174 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF BAMBOO STAKES TO MARK SHELLFISH BEDS IN LONG ISLAND SOUND.**

**Testimony in Support of:**

**H.B. No. 5309 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FINE FOR VIOLATING A QUARANTINE OR REGULATION OF THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.**

**H.B. No. 5310 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL FOR THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.**

**H.B. No. 5311 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION TO ENTER INTO COMPLIANCE AGREEMENTS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE EMERALD AS BORER.**

Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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*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 Gentile and Members of the Environment Committee:

**S.B. No. 174 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF BAMBOO STAKES TO MARK SHELLFISH BEDS IN LONG ISLAND SOUND.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau opposes S.B. No. 174 as it removes the authority of the Commissioner of Agriculture to approve the use of bamboo stakes in lieu of the buoy requirements outlined in Section 1 Section 26-227 of the general statutes. It is our understanding that the use of bamboo stakes in some instances is preferred as it can make monitoring and enforcement efforts easier for regulators and neighboring producers. We feel it is important to allow the Commissioner to approve the use of bamboo stakes where warranted.

**H.B. No. 5309 AN ACT CONCERNING THE FINE FOR VIOLATING A QUARANTINE OR REGULATION OF THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports H.B. No. 5309 as it increases the minimum and maximum fines that violators of quarantines or regulations designed to protect the CT agricultural industry are subject to. It is important that fines are significant enough to deter violations that could spread pests or diseases to unaffected commodities.

**H.B. No. 5310 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL FOR THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports H.B. No.5310 as it provides the opportunity for the board of control to take into account budgeted resources constraints when providing services to the agencies listed in Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 22-81 of the general statutes. The Agricultural Experiment Station has experienced significant cuts to its operating budget and it has a full list of responsibilities that must be carried out. H.B. No. 5310 would allow the board of control to effectively manage priorities in the most efficient manner.

**H.B. No. 5311 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION TO ENTER INTO COMPLIANCE AGREEMENTS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE EMERALD AS BORER.**

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports H.B. No. 5311 as it allows for the director to enter into compliance agreements with parties that will better safeguard against the spread of pests and diseases that could negatively impact our plants of economic importance. Compliance agreements are an integral part of managing the risks of dangerous insect pests and plant diseases and the director needs to be able use them to protect Connecticut's interests.