

Comments on H.B. No. 5335 (COMM) An Act Prohibiting the Possession and Storage of Fracking By-Products by Laura Niederhofer  
March 22, 2013

Good morning, my name is Laura Niederhofer. I am a resident of Westchester County, NY, volunteer for Chefs for the Marcellus, and helped support the passage of laws related to drilling waste disposal in Westchester and Putnam Counties, NY.

I am deeply appreciative that the state legislators of Connecticut recognize the danger posed by accepting the by-products of hydraulic fracturing and have taken these steps to protect public health and the environment.

According to the study “Economic Impacts of Connecticut’s Agricultural Industry” prepared by the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics and the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, there are 405,616 acres classified as agricultural. The study states, “.the agricultural industry has a critical, significant impact on the economy of Connecticut in output, jobs, and the quality of life: \$3.5 billion in output, 20,000 jobs, and significant social benefits and ecosystem services.”

This law is instrumental in helping protect this indispensable industry from the threat of hazardous radioactive waste. There is an ever-growing body of documented reports of livestock illness and death from acute toxicity poisoning from exposure to the fluids used during the fracturing process. Cows exposed to fluids from shale gas development have experienced difficulty breeding and higher rates of stillborn and deformed calves. In addition, humans are also not immune to these impacts on the reproductive and neurological systems.

Consumer confidence is essential for the success of any food producer. There are serious implications for Connecticut agriculture, whether contamination occurs or not, if the public learns food is produced in an area where fracking fluids are stored or disposed of by being applied to roads and able to leech into surrounding soil and contaminate drinking water resources. It is imperative that all roads – state, county, local and private – are protected to prevent consumers from doubting the quality and safety of foods produced in Connecticut.

I commend the Connecticut State Legislators for considering this law to prohibit the possession and storage of fracking by-products, which will help protect the agricultural industry and ensure that it continues to play a vital role in the development of the state’s economic and cultural fabric. Thank you.