

CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

Testimony in Support of S.B. No. 806, H.B. No. 6314 and H.B. 6316  
To the Environment Committee

Submitted by: Amy Blaymore Paterson, Esq., Executive Director  
February 15, 2013

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and members of the Committee:

Please accept this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council in support of **S. B. No. 806**: AAC THE MUNICIPAL PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION, **H.B. No. 6314**, AAC CERTAIN REVISIONS TO THE COMMUNITY FARMS PROGRAM, AND **H.B. No. 6316**: AAC STATE PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION.

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) works with land trusts, other conservation and advocacy organizations, government entities and landowners to increase the pace, quality and scale of land conservation in Connecticut while assuring the perpetual, high quality stewardship of conserved lands in the state. As Connecticut's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, CLCC focuses on building land trust capacity and sustainability, leading a unified land conservation voice for public policies that support land conservation, and engaging broad constituencies to foster a deep understanding of the benefits and need for land conservation. CLCC is guided by a Steering Committee with statewide representation.

As a coalition organization, CLCC strives to foster opportunities for efficient and effective partnerships to help to achieve its mission of land conservation. We are therefore supportive of the following bills which serve to improve the efficiency of current Department of Agriculture (DoAg) programs that enable towns and the state to work together to permanently protect farmland.

**S.B. No. 806** clarifies the existing municipal purchase of development rights (PDR) statute so that towns are provided with the ability to purchase the same development rights as is the state, including the owner's right to construct residences or farm structures on their agricultural land.

**H.B. No. 6314** strengthens the Community Farms Program by bringing certain of its provisions into alignment with the main Farmland Preservation Program (FPP), which provides DoAg with the right to acquire development rights to agricultural property. The FPP ensures that the farms stay in private ownership, continue to pay local property taxes, and, most importantly, remain viable and productive as working farms. The amendments help to improve the function and administrative efficiency of the program by allowing for the purchase of the owner's right to build a residence or farm structures, providing a statutory release provision for the easement, and authorizing the requirement of a conservation plan. HB 6314: It is important to note that the statutory release under subsection (d) means that this land is not permanently protected or conserved.

**H.B. No. 6316** allows municipalities working in partnership with the state on the joint acquisition of development rights to purchase easements on farms that have part of their land situated in an abutting town. This technical change will help to promote further efficiency in the administration of the program by removing an unnecessary complication for all parties involved in the transaction.

On behalf of the CLCC Steering Committee, I respectfully urge the committee to approve these bills in support of farmland preservation. Thank you again for your consideration and for this opportunity to submit testimony.