

HB 6519 An Act Concerning the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods

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I am a Vietnam era Navy submarine veteran and former Waterford Selectman.

The submarine base narrowly survived closing in the last two Base Reassignment and Closure Committees (BRAC). A significant disadvantage is the three bridges between the base and open water.

Five years ago the Department of Homeland Security noted that Eastern Connecticut has only a three day supply of food. Our agricultural capacity diminished during World War II when many farmers went to work in the defense industry, giving up full time farming.

Fearing that local agricultural capacity might become a factor in a future BRAC, I have been working to rebuild our local capacity. Our submarine base competitors in Georgia and Washington have strong agricultural economies.

Thames Valley Local Produce helps farmers expand their production and distribution.

The Eastern Connecticut Community Gardens Association (GetGrowingCT.org) has worked with local groups to start more than 80 gardens in the last 3 years. We also glean for the benefit of food banks. We have provided raised bed gardens to a homeless veteran's house and held preservation work parties for several veterans' houses.

We are rebuilding our local food economy with organic food and farmer's markets where nutritious produce is available at a price that fairly compensates farmers. Food labeling is critical to allowing consumers to evaluate produce available and will help Connecticut farmers.

I support HB 6519 as a way to help save the subbase, improve our economy, and improve food security, quality and our health.