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TESTIMONY OF VAN BROWN

*Raised Bill No.6313, AN ACT CONCERNING LOCALLY GROWN POULTRY IN CONNECTICUT  
FOOD MARKETS  
Environment Committee Public Hearing  
February 22,, 2013*

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, members of the Environment Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of *Raised Bill No.6313, AN ACT CONCERNING LOCALLY GROWN POULTRY IN CONNECTICUT FOOD MARKETS.*

My name is Van Brown, I own, with my family, Firefly Farms in North Stonington. We raise organic and organic method pasture raised chickens and forest raised pork.

Thank you for proposing this bill. Please note that I choose my words very carefully. There is a growing body of laws that prohibit telling the truth, even with evidence and scientific proof, about the United States corporate food production system. Not farmers. Food production systems.

As you know, Connecticut adopted a modification of the Federal PL90-492, small poultry slaughter law that favors huge corporations such as Tyson and Perdue and prevents small farm processors from marketing to stores or resellers.

Under *Federal* PL90-492 regulations small processors may sell to any entity without limit. In order to get our PL90-492 certification, our facility is inspected to the same level as a USDA inspected facility by both the USDA **and** the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. That is a lot to ask of someone who only raises a thousand birds a year.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture Farmer's Guide to Meat and Poultry Processing warns, and I quote, "*However, the State of Connecticut law overrides these additional USDA exemptions. All poultry and poultry products shall have been inspected for **wholesomeness** under an official regulatory program.*"

The largest market for poultry is in the stores. This is the domain of the factory chicken producers such as Tyson and Perdue. What the Connecticut law does is effectively shut out small farm processors from participating in that market. This does not make sense, unless you are a corporation like Tyson or Perdue.

It is Perdues and Tysons who do not feel safe with small producers being allowed to compete with them. Although other states allow PL90-492 small farms to sell to grocery stores, we in Connecticut are not clean enough.

Have you ever wondered why that attractively wrapped chicken you buy in the store feels slick? Remember the last time you bleached laundry? After using Clorox, even though you washed your hands, didn't they feel slick?

Factory farmed chicken is so filthy and so contaminated by the slaughter process that they have to be dipped repeatedly in a series of vats filled with bloody Clorox water covered with floating feces, viscera, clotted blood and feathers in order for it to be declared safe – not necessarily clean, but disinfected. Safe.

This is sort of like using Purell. Your hands may not be clean, but they are disinfected.

We, the people, worry that small farm processors like Firefly may not be wholesome?

How could the poultry factories, in all good conscience, feed that “wrongness” to the unknowing public?

It does not make sense that a small family farm, and yes, most of them are family farms, can sell to a restaurant or a consumer, but not to the reseller who supplies the restaurant or the consumer.

We have seen it time and again that once a knowledgeable consumer is given a choice, they pick clean, safe food.

I would love to see the exclusionary structure removed so that the Connecticut consumers, like consumers in so many other states, have a choice.

To all of you who support this bill, thank you for fighting for the little guys and for the Connecticut consumer.

Should you wish to hear it, I could describe the process of the poultry factory versus Firefly.

Thank you for your time and consideration.