



# TOWN OF ROXBURY CONNECTICUT

---

**Barbara Henry**  
First Selectman

29 North Street • P.O. Box 203 • Roxbury, CT 06783-0203  
Tel: (860) 354-9938 • Fax: (860) 354-0560

**Testimony**  
**Barbara Henry**  
**First Selectman, Town of Roxbury**

**Environment Committee**  
**March 13, 2013**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in *support* of **HB-6542, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESERVATION OF FARMLAND AT THE SOUTHBURY TRAINING SCHOOL.**

HB-6542 would preserve and protect 900 acres of farmland and open space owned by the Southbury Training School, of which 105 acres are in Roxbury. Agricultural land not only adds to the scenic beauty of our small towns but preserves our rich agricultural heritage and our state's heritage as well. Unfortunately, these lands are rapidly disappearing from the CT landscape.

Recognizing the importance of preserving and protecting Connecticut's agricultural lands, the state adopted the Farmland Preservation program in 1978 with the goal of preserving 130,000 acres. By authorizing the state to grant a conservation easement to preserve Southbury Training School's agricultural lands, HB-6542 helps Connecticut move closer to achieving this goal.

Small towns like Roxbury have fought to keep our farms and open space and supported the efforts of our Land Trust during its successful "Save Our Farms" campaign which preserved almost 800 acres and 3 farms being eyed for development. The volunteer Trust's dedication and efforts to preserving the community's rural character for generations to come has resulted in 3,400 acres or about 17 percent of Roxbury being conserved as open space under their stewardship. When the towns of Roxbury and Southbury are helped by this bill to get closer to achieving their preservation goals, the State of Connecticut is the beneficiary in meeting its goals.

In addition, by authorizing the state Department of Agriculture to lease the land for farming, this bill will generate additional state and local tax revenues and help create jobs in our region. This could benefit our local economy.

HB-6542 will help preserve hundreds of acres of farmland to be enjoyed by generations to come, create jobs and increase revenues. This bill is certainly a win-win for Connecticut and the communities of Roxbury and Southbury. I strongly urge your support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

---