



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and Members of the Environment Committee:

HB 05044. AN ACT CONCERNING DOMESTICATED HORSES; The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports HB 05044 and we commend the Governor and supporters of this bill for their leadership on this issue. The equine industry is included in the definition of agriculture as defined under Section 1-1q of the Connecticut General Statutes. There are over 50,000 horses in Connecticut and we have the 3rd highest density of horses in the nation and the highest number of horses of any New England state. To put this in perspective, we have more than double number of horses than milking cows in Connecticut. The Connecticut Farm Bureau along with the Connecticut Horse Council submitted an amicus brief to the CT Supreme Court last year as it heard arguments relating to a civil suit where a lower court ruled that horses are as a species, inherently vicious animals. If the Supreme Court upholds the lower court ruling it will have devastating effects on the horse industry in Connecticut. Liability insurance would likely be prohibitively expensive if available at all. In addition the standard of care required to keep the public away from horses would require massive capital investment for secure, double-fenced paddocks and pens that would be necessary. We fear that horse farmers and horse owners will leave Connecticut in droves to relocate their operations to other states. We wholeheartedly support the passing of HB 05044 which will establish the presumption that domesticated horses are not inherently dangerous and do not possess a vicious propensity. This will make it possible for Connecticut to continue our long-standing tradition of being leaders in the New England equine industry.

SB 00239. AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF PROPANE NOISE MAKERS TO REPEL WILDLIFE; The Connecticut Farm Bureau opposes SB00239 as we believe it is unnecessary. There is currently a comprehensive permit program administered by the Department of Agriculture that has specific requirements for hours of operation, decibel levels and assessment of demonstrated need by farmers. Additionally, the permit process gives the Commissioner of Agriculture processes to deal with local complaints and allows the Commissioner of Agriculture to rescind operating permits in connection with non-compliance and complaints from local municipalities.

HB 05310. AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT'S SEED LAW; The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports HB05310 as it brings the Connecticut seed law up to date by adopting the Association of American Seed Officials Uniform State Seed Law. This is important as it will give the Department of Agriculture a seed law that is consistent with other states and representative of current industry needs and practices.