

Submitted by: J Mark Harran, President, Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut.

This to communicate that I support H.B. 05340. It would help all maple syrup producers in Connecticut as well as the State's economy and the health of forests in CT. As demonstrated by a successful pilot program (Specialty Grant from CTDOA and USDA) aimed at increasing maple syrup production in CT, one of the biggest opportunities for growth is to open more forests in CT for maple tapping. Currently, only 1/10 of one percent of the eligible trees in CT are tapped. This compares to 4% in VT and 33% in Quebec. Part of the reason for the low level tapping in CT is that land owners (private and government) are concerned for the liability incurred by opening forest land to tapping. If that were not the case, the production of maple syrup in CT would clear an important hurdle in its potential to grow from a crop value of about \$1 million to \$20 million per year, as outlined in the aforementioned Specialty Grant growth initiative. In addition to the economic benefits, maple producer would serve to place more forest back into useful production and the maple producers would become another source for detecting invasive species and the like. Indeed, maple producers, by nature, are dedicated to preserving the health of their sugar bushes and this valuable mindset/resource could be transferred to more forests in CT, if H.B. 05340 becomes law.