

March 5, 2014

Testimony in support of: H.B. 05340 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LIABILITY OF A LANDOWNER WHO PERMITS MAPLE-SUGARING ACTIVITIES ON THE LAND.

Submitted by: William Farrell, Maple Syrup Producer, Lyme, CT 06371, Member of the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

As a Connecticut maple syrup maker, I support H.B. 05340 which would help my operation and other Connecticut maple syrup makers to expand more readily and add jobs in the State. Most of the opportunities to tap sugar maple trees are on parcels scattered throughout my town and neighboring towns and working with so many landowners presents a logistical challenge. When securing long-term access to sugar maples the difficulty can be compounded by landowners' concern for personal liability arising from my activities on their property. It would be of great help in gaining access to these new properties if the owners knew that they would not be liable for injury or property damage as result of allowing me to harvest sap on their property.

During the last fifteen years the US maple syrup industry has expanded production by over 70% (source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census) but Connecticut's production growth has been held back by the patchwork of parcels and the fragmentation of its forests, among other things. Hundreds of Connecticut sugar makers tap only a small fraction of the millions of sugar maples across the State and passing H.B. 05340 will facilitate greater access to these maple (food) resources and provide income and jobs to our citizens. Maple is a growth industry and I ask the State to help remove the roadblocks to realizing Connecticut's potential.