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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 Maynard, Representative Guerrera and Members of the Transportation Committee:

Raised Bill No. 336 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PENALTY FOR CAUSING HARM TO A VULNERABLE USER OF A PUBLIC WAY.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports the adoption of RB 336. The bill provides for special consideration and protections for vulnerable users as defined in Section 1 through the assessment of a fine up to $1,000 for individuals who fail to exercise reasonable care in the event of injury or death of a vulnerable user. From an agricultural perspective, the definition includes "a person riding or driving an animal" as well as "a person operating or riding on an agricultural tractor". We would suggest the bill be amended to include "or other agricultural equipment" following the word "tractor". Agricultural operators often encounter motorists who exceed the speed limit or drive recklessly or aggressively on public roads. The potential for serious accidents increase as road congestion expands away from population centers and farm operations are reestablished in more populated areas. We feel SB 336 will help draw attention to the issue of sharing the roads with vulnerable users and encourage a higher level of caution.