



Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association

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George Motel

Testimony before the Finance Committee

SB 946 AAC Revenue Items to Implement the Governor's Budget Recommendations

In Opposition to Cuts to the Community Investment Act

Good afternoon Representative Berger and Senator Fonfara and members of the Finance Revenue and Bonding Committee, my name is George Motel, and my wife and I are the owners of Sunset Meadow Vineyards in Goshen, CT. We started our vineyard about fifteen years ago by purchasing a non producing farm. We began to plant vines and for the first two years of operation we sold fruit to other CT Vineyards. Today we have over 35 acres of vines planted and produce about 5,500 cases per year. I am here in my capacity as the President of the CT Vineyard and Winery Association (CVWA) in opposition to the cuts and total sweeping of the Community Investment Act (CIA).

One of the many important programs that the CIA funds is a \$50,000 grant to the CT Farm Wine Development Council. The Council, through the Department of Agriculture, then produces the Passport Program for all CT Vineyards. This program is the main marketing program and driver of visitors to our wineries. Our wineries rely on this program to stay in business. While visitors are touring our vineyards they are not only buying our wine, but frequenting CT's gas stations, restaurants and shops along the way. We are a tourist destinations that are economic drivers for the State. The CIA investment is a small price to pay to help bolster that activity. We ask you to fully fund the CIA so CT Vineyards can continue to thrive.