



PRESERVING WORKING LANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Testimony OPPOSING Section 5 of H.B. 6825
An Act Making Deficiency Appropriations and Addressing the Deficit for the
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015

To the Appropriations Committee
Submitted by: Elisabeth Moore, Executive Director, CT Farmland Trust
April 21, 2015

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Committee Members:

Connecticut Farmland Trust **strongly opposes** Section 5 of H.B. 6825, which proposes diverting \$10 million from the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program, \$5.1 million from historic preservation projects, and \$100,000 from the CT Food Policy Council. This proposed diversion of \$15.1 million from Community Investment Act funding is in addition to the complete sweep proposed for the Act's funding from January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

The Community Investment Act was formed to provide dedicated funding (that is, outside of the general fund) to support farmland preservation, open space conservation, affordable housing, and historic preservation. To date, over 1,100 projects in 168 municipalities have benefited from Community Investment Act funding.

As a land preservation organization, Connecticut Farmland Trust is particularly distressed about the proposed diversion of \$10 million from the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program. The Council of Environmental Quality recently reported Connecticut is seriously lagging in its efforts to meet the statutory goal of protecting 21% of our land as open space by 2023. **The proposed diversions would nearly eliminate the only consistent funding for the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program**, an important tool to help the state meet the 21% statutory goal. Funding from this program has helped Connecticut Farmland Trust and our partners protect six family farms with diverse recreation, natural, and agricultural resources.

On behalf of Connecticut Farmland Trust, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose Section 5 of HB 6825.

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