



April 20, 2015

RE: Opposition to Section 5 of HB 6825

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut (CT NOFA) strongly opposes section 5 of HB 6825 which takes money from the Community Investment Act Fund to fill a hole in the General Fund.

CT NOFA is a membership organization of about 800 farmers, gardeners, chefs, scientists, teachers and consumers who see great benefit in increasing our production and consumption of local and organic food. We were formed with that mission in 1982. In the more than 30 years since then, we have seen an enormous growth in the public's interest in local and organic food and a wonderful growth in the past ten years in the number of young people starting farms.

CT NOFA and its members have been strong supporters of the Community Investment Act and its mechanism to fund many important needs and aspects of our shared communities. We have worked with the Working Lands Alliance and other partners over the past ten years to support and guide the program.

The benefits of this innovative Act are spread broadly throughout Connecticut in more open space, in protected farmland and a more vibrant agriculture; in communities with affordable housing and towns that don't lose important historic buildings.

Although agriculture (and food) bear a small part of the cost of Section 5, this is exactly the wrong time to remove funding from the Food Policy Council. Its work, in combination with that of town and city food policy councils, dozens or hundreds of non-profit organizations, and thousands of farmers, chefs and food businesses, is critical to a sustainable and healthy future for Connecticut citizens.

Besides being very detrimental to be future livability and sustainability of our wonderful state, section 5 breaks faith with the people who supported this increased fee if it was used for open space, agriculture, historic preservation and affordable housing.

I hope you will remove Section 5 from this bill.

If you have any questions, please contact me at bdusing@mac.com or at (203) 231-1790.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Duesing". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Duesing
Organic Advocate
CT NOFA