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This testimony relates to House Bill 6731, An Act Concerning the Treatment of Certain Farm Land for Purposes of the Estate Tax. As an association, we are strongly in favor of this bill.

While there are programs for preserving farm land, they are not accessible for the Nursery/Greenhouse (Green) Industry, which represents half of Connecticut agriculture. Public Act 490 allows an assurance of viability for Green Industry members who are invested in their land for an extended period of time.

Our goods are widely consumed and are often expensive to ship long distances. There is an opportunity to capture increasing demand with product grown in state as transportation expenses rise. Benefits would show in additional payroll, sales and income taxes generated through production and sales of our products

Exemption from estate taxes would allow many agricultural businesses to concentrate on expansion and creation of more jobs rather than managing a difficult tax burden. We feel that maintaining a healthy business climate on farms is critical for long term success so that state government can receive continued revenues from financially solvent businesses.

We appreciate the committee looking into this bill to help out farms and look forward to a positive result. We are always available for questions on this matter and any other ideas or concerns relating to the Green Industry.

Regards,

Mark Schuman
Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association
Executive Secretary