



## **TOWN OF GOSHEN**

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### **ROBERT P. VALENTINE, FIRST SELECTMAN**

**Testimony of:  
Robert P. Valentine  
First Selectman  
Town of Goshen  
And  
Mary Tracy**

**Before the  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
LOB Hearing Room 1E  
Concerning SB 360**

**March 20, 2015**

Good afternoon Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Chapin, Representative Willis, Representative Case, and members of the Environment Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 360. My name is Robert Valentine I'm First Selectman of the Town of Goshen.

We are here today in support of SB 360, AN ACT AUTHORIZING HERD SHARES WITHIN THE PRODUCTION OF MILK AND RAW MILK PRODUCTS AND THE MANUFACTURE OF CHEESE FOR PERSONAL CONSUMPTION.

The Town of Goshen is very fortunate to have an active Agricultural Council whose mission it is to Preserve, Promote and Protect agriculture in the Town of Goshen. With me today is Mary Tracy a member of our Agricultural Council and owner of a small farm in Goshen.

Good afternoon, my name is Mary Tracy and I live at 203 Ivy Mountain Road in Goshen, CT. I am a registered nurse by profession. I have a herd of 29 goats, 12 milking does.

I became interested in the value of goats and goat milk when my husband and I took care of a 1 year old from Belize through Healing the Children in 1996 (we lived in New Milford at the time). When it was time to return her to Belize, I realized that the family was living in the remote bush by the Guatemalan border and did not have a source of milk for their daughter. The father had carried canned milk on his back to the village – a “nimby beheck” - a very far walk.

I then learned all I could from a goat dairy in New Milford and ended up shipping dairy goats to Belize.

Before I knew it I had goats in my backyard and then moved my small herd to another person's farm in New Milford.

We then bought an old farm with 15 acres and a small barn in Goshen in 2004. Since then I have been trying to figure out how to make goat milk and cheese available to people who are interested in consuming it.

Right now I can provide milk only to my immediate family. I can sell the milk for soap making or for the nourishment of other animals, but I cannot sell or even give my milk away because of current regulation. Furthermore, the cost of following all the state regulations for the sale of milk is prohibitive for a small farm like mine. These regulations would require that I make a substantial investment in equipment and infrastructure such as, new pumps, install new septic fields, purchase new water heaters, build a milking room and milk house. These items can easily add up to \$50,000 to \$80,000, dollars a small farm like mine does not have.

If there were the opportunity to have written herd share agreement'(s) as is currently the practice in 8 States, Alaska, Idaho, Wyoming, Michigan, North Dakota, Tennessee, Colorado, and Ohio, I and others would be able to contract with individuals to purchase a part or all of a goat and provide that person with the milk the animal produces. This arrangement would;

- Create a signed and dated written contract between a single herd share farmer and shareholder:
- Establish a workable means of communication between the farmer and all of the households receiving milk
- Provide milk from a single farm that would not co-mingle
- Not allow milk for sale or resale

In short, it would allow small farming operations like mine the ability to share a wholesome locally produced product with my community.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert P. Valentine  
First Selectman, Town of Goshen

Mary Tracy, Goshen CT

Encl: Letter of support from Goshen Agricultural Council and New Milford Agricultural council