New Milford Farmland & Forest Preservation Committee
Town Hall
10 Main Street
New Milford CT 06776

March 19, 2015

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Letter of Support for S.B. 360

Dear Sirs:

I am writing on behalf of the Town of New Milford Farmland & Forest Preservation Committee (NMFFPC) to express our support for Senate Bill 360, authorizing the practice of herd-share, which allows the transfer and exchange of raw milk between people who are parties to a shared animal ownership agreement.

Since 2006 our Committee has been working to save our town's remaining farmland and quickly realized that it was equally important to save farmers as well as farmland. One way to save farmers is by assisting them with the marketing and distribution of their products.

The shared animal ownership agreement is made between the farmer and another person. The agreement, in writing, states the farmer's responsibilities are to provide a safe, healthy environment and to feed the animal an agreed upon diet. Depending on the agreement, this may stipulate hormone free, organic-based feeds with well-maintained pastures. The farmer agrees to provide a clean, well maintained place where milk is collected and provisions for cooling and storing the milk properly. The other party agrees to accept the risks involved in consuming raw milk. The other party is also educated in the handling and storing of raw milk and has access to the animal and the farm.

As local produce and food products are becoming more valued and sought after, this bill allows for increased opportunity for farmers to distribute their products, increased availability of local milk, and gives the consumers a level of certainty of how and where that product is being produced. This bill also reduces the costly regulations that the farmer may find prohibitive in running a small business.

I strongly encourage the Environment Committee to lend its support to lend their support to this Bill. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if I can be of any additional assistance.

Sincerely,

Steve Kleppin, Chairman
New Milford Farmland & Forest Preservation Committee