

SB 946

To the members of the General Assembly,

I am asking you today to support SB 946 and eliminate the Connecticut Investment account or CIA fund. As I write this, I am reminded that I wrote in favor of this program 6 years ago, and regretted this decision very much. There are many reasons for the shifting of my views on this subject; the main reason is that in the past five years, the number of dairy farms in Connecticut has decreased, and in the same five-year period, neighboring states that aren't employing funding for Dairy Farm Sustainability grants, are also experiencing a similar decrease in the number of dairy farms, showcasing the ineffectiveness of these grants.¹ More evidence to compound my theory that these grants are not the right solution for the dairy industry are the stories of Beech Tree Ranch in Bloomfield² and Shady Maple Farm³ in Salisbury. These farms received grants from the state in 2013 and went out of business the same calendar year. The reason these grants are so ineffective is that the dairy industry, specifically its pricing structure is broken, and throwing money at farms to keep them afloat is a band aid solution to a larger problem.

Personally, I feel that this money could be better spent in the hands of taxpayers. Or if the money were to remain dedicated to grant money for agricultural use, that there be more effective oversight of where exactly that money goes and the investments that it is put towards. The state should be accountable for making sure that the investments proposed by the farmer's be economically sound, and work towards improving the condition of their business. Thank you for your time.

Matthew Staebner

¹ USDA National Ag Statistics Service

² <http://www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/cwp/view.asp?A=4010&Q=523028>,
<https://www.elicense.ct.gov/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>

³ <http://www.moodogpress.com/2014/03/roll-out-2014-cultivate-community-business-farms> ,
<https://www.elicense.ct.gov/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx>