

Graywall Farms

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March 9, 2015

S.B. 946 - An Act Concerning Revenue Items to Implement the Governor's Budget **Testimony of Robin A. Chesmer AGAINST Raiding CIA Funds**

The Community Investment Act (CIA) is a program that works!!

Funding should not be diverted from its mission: Affordable Housing, Open Space Conservation, Farmland Preservation/Dairy Sustainability and Historic Preservation.

The value of the CIA Programs impact on the Farmland Preservation Program cannot be underestimated. It has worked well to keep high quality soils in active agricultural production. These are investments that stimulate the state's economy, provide recreational and environmental benefits, quality of life and importantly a source of fresh, local food.

As a dairy farmer, I can testify to the success of the CIA Program in maintaining a healthy dairy infrastructure and providing investments in farmland preservation that benefits current as well as future generations of Connecticut residents.

In recent years, Connecticut's dairy farms have experienced some seriously difficult financial years interspersed with a few good seasons. The Dairy Sustainability Program played a key role in stabilizing dairy farm receipts so as to cover the cost of milk production during the lean years.

The current 2015 year is another challenging year for dairy farmers as milk prices are plummeting and premiums are being eliminated. Now, more than ever, the CIA Program is needed to provide financial relief during a difficult year.

Connecticut dairy farmers are the victims of an inequitable Federal Milk Pricing Policy system that does not consider regional differences in cost of production. It costs more to produce milk in Connecticut than other parts of the country. CT dairy farmers are *Price Takers.....Not Price Makers.....*and can't pass on increased costs of production. The CIA Program works to level the playing field and keep Connecticut farmers on the land.

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