

S.B. 946 AN ACT CONCERNING REVENUE ITEMS TO IMPLEMENT THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I would like to strongly urge you to please include funding for the Community Investment Act in your budget. The Community Investment Act funds many programs, many of them agricultural, which provide a major economic stimulus to our state. As someone whom has been involved in the Connecticut dairy industry for over 15 years this hits close to home. The CIA and more specifically The Dairy Sustainability Account have made a very positive impact on the Connecticut dairy industry since being implemented and our industry would most likely not even be here without it.

The Dairy Sustainability Account forms a price safety net that kicked in when the pay price to dairy farmers in CT dropped 20% below the cost of production of milk. This is important because it is much more expensive to produce milk here in CT than in other states. The idea of sweeping these funds couldn't come at a worse time as farm pay prices are at record lows right now and those of us in the industry need the program more than ever. Unfortunately these prices are not set by supply and demand but rather by the federal government, thus giving us no control over them.

I can assure you that the funds from the Dairy Sustainability Account don't only affect the individual farms either. These farms spread it around to many different service providers such as me. I personally do not own a dairy farm; however I do own and operate a farm service which is aimed primarily at the dairy industry. I provide custom farm services and farm seed to farms all over eastern CT. When the Dairy Sustainability Account was put in place the future of the CT dairy industry looked bright and that spurred me to form my own company. My business has grown over the past three years and I was at the point of hiring some of my first employees when the news of the dairy price crash and the possible sweep of the CIA funds came. The future of my business is unsure without this program and I urge you to maintain its funding. Thank you

Sincerely,

Zach Olson

Owner

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