



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

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Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, a statewide nonprofit membership organization representing 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis and members of the Environment Committee,

S.J. No. 5 -RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION CONCERNING THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE STATE.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau generally supports the concept of making it more difficult for the state to dispose of land or easements that were acquired with specific conservation purposes or programs. However we believe the language contained in S.J. No. 5 is too broad and ambiguous. The first three sentences in Sec. 21 assign specific citizen rights that could be interpreted to conflict with private property rights including those retained by fee owners of protected farmland and other rights such as those outlined in CT right-to-farm law. We therefore recommend that the first three sentences in Section 21 and the corresponding wording outlined in the proposed ballot language be deleted.

We are also concerned with the language “Any state land or easement held for conservation purposes shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by an act approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the general assembly following a public hearing on such act” should be changed to “Any state land or easement acquired with a specific conservation program or a specific and defined conservation purpose declared at the time of acquisition shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by an act approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the general assembly following a public hearing on such act”. (The corresponding ballot language should be changed as well). Without this change virtually any land the state has a real estate interest in and manages for a conservation purpose would require the 2/3 approval to change its use or dispose of even if that land was not originally acquired for a conservation purpose. Therefore we encourage this committee more narrowly define which specific state land or state easements this Constitutional Amendment would apply to and remove the ambiguity of the current language.

R.B. No. 76 AN ACT CONCERNING CONNECTICUT’S FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports this Bill as it requires food service management companies that respond to a request for proposals posted on the State Contracting Portal for local or regional board of education’s school nutrition program provide detailed information as to whether or not the bid facilitates the purchase from local farmers. Without this requirement it is impossible to determine if the provisions established in section 22-38d of the general statutes which requires that all other factors being equal, that preference is given to the purchase of products from local farmers.