

Members of the commission,

My name is Chris Coppola. My wife(Sandy) and, I own Triple Bar C performance horses in Berlin(Kensington) ,Ct.

I am writing today in reference to HB 5534.

Berlin, Ct has a reputation of being business " unfriendly". Make no mistake when I say farmers are not exempt from the bullying. We graze all but ½ an acre, but, we are forced to give our Assessor 2 acres for a building lot. We know that no law exists that mandates 2 acres ,but, when you have an Assessor that fully takes advantage of Municipal Indemnity/Estoppel, the farmers are unfairly burdened.

It is hard to raise, train ,and, sell horses in a State where the woeful mismanagement of our funds has caused a mass exodus of professional families ,and, businesses from our State. These people are our customers. But, to then have our towns burden us even more with unfair taxation, makes it almost impossible to succeed. Every dollar in tax is put into the price of our products. They are pricing us out of our markets!

As I write this, I am being forced to file suit against my town. My farm assessment went up more than any home in my neighborhood. Much more than the homes that underwent major renovations. And, my home is original back to 1992!(all other non- updated homes stayed the same ,or, were lowered) Their goal is to tax our farm as if no PA490 designation was on it. And, even though they had no legitimate reason for the rise, my appeal was lost , and, my place went up the highest in the neighborhood. How can we succeed when we are treated as second class citizens?

Farming is an honorable tradition. I come from farmers in North Haven, who come from generations of farmers in Italy. My family has worked with horses since the early 1800's.

But, this may be the last farm in our family here in Ct. The hard work , coupled with the bloodthirst of the towns makes it unpalatable for a young person to want to farm for a living. Honestly, who can blame them. Farmers feed , and, supply our society ,and, are discriminated against by their towns who know most farmers are land rich ,and, cash poor. The Assessors know the farmers don't have the funds to fight back, and, also know they(the Assessors) will use town funds to outlast in court the same people who pay their salaries. It's as despicable as it gets.

I guess it will take empty store shelves to wake everyone up. Too bad many of our elected officials only look to the next election, instead of what's truly best for our state, and, those that provide for its citizens good, wholesome, locally grown products.

Without manufacturing, we cannot progress. Without farmers we starve!

Please help the farmers of Ct! Don't forget us any longer

If I can assist further, or, testify, please ask. Ct is my home. I don't want to have to leave my home, just so my business can succeed.

Help the farmers to stay and, succeed in Ct. Pass HB 5534, please!

Chris Coppola/ Triple Bar C