



324 Mill Street  
P.O. Box 11115  
Waterbury, CT 06706

February 22, 2018

Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Susan Pronovost and I am the Executive Director of Brass City Harvest, a 501(c)(3) non-profit agricultural Community Development Corporation located in the City of Waterbury.

I appreciate this opportunity to offer my organization's support of **S.B. No. 106, *An Act Concerning the Sale of "Connecticut Grown" Products***. This proposed legislation builds upon the previous efforts of Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky to establish a foundation, that ensures maintenance of fidelity of the legal intent and meaning of the "Connecticut Grown" brand and its use in the public marketplace.

The intent of the Farm to School Initiative is to infuse locally grown produce into various schools and school districts so that students are exposed to nutrient-dense fresh food that can be found at local farms. This is especially important to our urban school systems where students have very few opportunities to be connected to their local farmer(s) and the source(s) of their locally grown food.

The Farm-to-School Initiative also has a secondary purpose to provide pathways to new markets for our state's farmers. The intent of the Initiative is to foster that very critical connection to Connecticut's farmers and to keep the dollars generated from farm sales to school districts reinvested in the local economy.

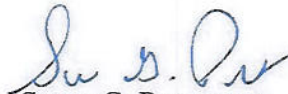
Preservation of the Connecticut Grown brand is an important consumer tool that ensures transparency of food source to the end user or consumer. It is often very easy for a large food distributor or regional food wholesaler to bid on a municipal Farm-to-School Initiative or school district food service contract and to take advantage of special categories that give preference to Connecticut Grown produce. When the food is delivered to a school, a custodian or cafeteria worker is completely unaware of what was bid and what type of product is coming in. Their job is to sign a delivery slip and make sure the produce is brought to the cafeteria kitchen or stored properly. Currently, no one is obligated to check the farm source of any of the produce that is delivered through their doors. There is generally no way for a school district's food service director to verify if volume food purchases are indeed Connecticut Grown – as bid - because that food is delivered directly to the schools and the food service personnel who have advertised these produce bids are located in a centralized office elsewhere.

This simple amendment clarifies existing language that will help to eliminate some of those issues by requiring the bidders to provide some proof or validation of the Connecticut farm source when they have specifically bid on the provision of Connecticut Grown farm products.

This organization is grateful for the perseverance of Commissioner Reviczky to vigilantly promote and keep whole, the Connecticut Grown brand. I hope that he will have the full support of this Honorable Committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to present my organization's viewpoint on this subject matter.

Sincerely,

  
Susan G. Pronovost  
Executive Director