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February 22, 2018

Honorable Members of the Environment Committee:

My name is Michael Wrobel and I am the Vice President of the Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association ("CGGA"). The CGGA represents the interests of some 200 family-owned greenhouse growers and field crop farmers across the State of Connecticut.

I appreciate this opportunity to offer the CGGA's endorsement of **S.B. No. 106, *An Act Concerning the Sale of "Connecticut Grown" Products***. We commend the perseverance of Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner of Agriculture, to maintain conformity with the original intent of the legislation that created the Connecticut Grown program.

Our members have long been concerned about the competitive nature of the public bid process when they are confronted with regional wholesale distributors. Quite often school districts provide special categories for "Connecticut Grown" produce but there never seems to exist a check-and-balance system to ensure that the products – *as bid and delivered* – are in fact sourced from Connecticut farms.

This legislation simply builds upon existing language that will require school districts to have their Connecticut Grown produce validated as to farm source. In all honesty, this legislation is actually addressed in the US FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act so that there is transparency in the food distribution process and there is the ability to trace back to the farm source in the event of a food-borne illness outbreak. This proposed legislation is beneficial to all parties and helps to insure the health of our school children.

The statewide marketplace is very competitive, and our growers suffer from economic pressure from factory farms located in other states. This legislation promotes a level playing

field that establishes a practice of marketplace transparency. We applaud Commissioner Reviczky for his constant devotion to Connecticut agriculture and his ardent belief in the promotion of the Connecticut Grown brand which facilitates the reinvestment of precious dollars back into the economy of the State of Connecticut.

On behalf of the Connecticut Greenhouse Growers Association, we ask this Honorable Committee to support S.B. No. 106 which will confirm your continued appreciation of the value of the Connecticut Grown brand to our state's agricultural economy.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our views on this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Wrobel", written in a cursive style.

Michael Wrobel
Vice President