



TESTIMONY REGARDING:

**SB 845 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED
FROM ANAEROBIC DIGESTION**

February 21, 2019

Submitted by: Seth Bahler CEO of Oakridge Dairy

To the members of Energy and Technology Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 845 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED FROM ANAEROBIC DIGESTION

Oakridge Dairy is honored to be a part of the Ellington community, a community we've called home since 1890. We take pride in producing a healthy, nutritious, wholesome, and local product that feeds our community and a growing world. We know the best way to be a good neighbor and business is to keep our cows happy, comfortable, and healthy; and to keep our land and waters clean, which is easier thanks to new technologies and improved farming practices.

Owning 2900 cows is a 24/7 365 days a year commitment. At Oakridge we have a great team of 45 skilled employees that raise and care for our girls and work the 3000 acres of land in Tolland and Hartford County. We produce over 15% of Connecticut's milk (25,000 gallons per day) which is important because CT ships in about 40% of its milk from out of state. Over the past 2 years we have built over \$15MM of infrastructure to make sure we will be here for a long time. Even with 752 solar panels, the most energy efficient lights, fans, motors and pumps our energy needs are still over \$35k per month.

On-farm anaerobic digestion projects has been a plan of ours from the beginning. We have been working on getting a project started for a few years. We have met with multiple departments including DEEP and DECD and everyone thinks it's a great idea! Then we hit the challenges in permit, finance, PPA and more . We need a way to streamline this process.

I offer the following needs specific to creating a marketplace that would allow for on-farm generation projects to be successful:

- Allow for both the generation and sale of electricity and gas, depending on the project and region;
- Exempt manure transfer between farms from any waste permitting requirements;
- Create a tax credit to incentivize investors to invest in on-farm generation;
- Increase access, or mandate, Green Bank participation in on-farm generation projects;



- Create an alternative generation rate for energy produce by an on-farm generation project

On-farm energy production provides benefits to the consumer and the farm operation, in addition to contributing to the state's renewable energy goals. Counted among the many benefits of increasing on-farm energy production through anaerobic digester projects are the following:

- Alternative energy generation
- 24/7 energy generation
- Farm business operations:
 - Reduced energy costs in a high energy industry
 - Ability to mitigate phosphorus run-off
 - Ability to pelletize and sell phosphorus as a new source of revenue
- Carbon sequestration
- Food waste reduction
- Increased carbon reduction compared to other alternative energy sources
- Water quality improvement
- Micro-grid potential