

Energy & Technology Committee

Re: SB 845

Submitted by Matthew Freund

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My Name is Matthew Freund, I'm a dairy farmer in North Canaan CT. I farm with my brother, daughter, and son on 450 acres and milk 300 cows using the first robotic milking system installed in the state. I'm also running one of the oldest anaerobic digesters built in the United States. When I built this digester in 1997, we budgeted 84,000 dollars. To keep the system running we had three major renovations. Each one was a learning event not only for us but for the digester industry. Our digester is outdated and is well past its life expectancy. The industry has come a long way with the technology in 22 years. Technology comes with a price, today a digester with a co-gen system to service a 300-cow dairy is going to run a minimum of 2.5 million dollars. So today to build or replace a digester we need a clear revenue source for the products being produced by this energy plant. If we are going to be solving the food waste issue by using our digesters, we need to invest in nutrient retrieval solutions as well.

Connecticut has an opportunity to combine the manure from farms that are near each other. But we need to exempt manure transfer between farms from any waste permitting requirements in order to do so. We should have a Heat Utilization Energy Credit for systems that will be making renewable natural gas. Having a tax credit would incentivize investors to invest in on-farm generation. We need to mandate green bank participation and create an alternative generation rate for energy production on-farm.

Because of our investment in our digester in 1997, we were able to invent new usages for the manure we produce on our farm. We manufacture a biodegradable pot from our cows' digested manure. We've developed an international market for CowPots which has created 6 additional full-time jobs on our farm.

Milking cows alone will not keep the next generation farming in Connecticut. We need to find and invest in new technologies to supplement incomes on farms or the landscape will change forever.