March 10, 2019

Submitted by: Bryan Hurlburt, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association Executive Director

To the members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 1002 AN ACT CONCERNING PHOSPHATE BYWASTES FROM ANAEROBIC DIGESTERS.

The CT Farm Bureau Association is a private, non-profit, membership organization representing nearly 3,000 CT families dedicated to elevating the status of agriculture in our state through education, market promotion, and legislative advocacy. Agriculture in CT is made up of over 6,000+ small businesses, contributing $4 billion to CT’s economy and employing 21,000, working 436,000 acres of land.

CFBA has long supported efforts to develop on-farm energy projects to reduce operating costs and provide additional revenue for farmers to help with farm viability. Agricultural Virtual Net Metering was designed to do just that while providing for expansion of diversified renewal energy. Other states have created and supported an environment for farms to develop and bring anaerobic digesters on-line, while our projects are stalled in the design phase due to challenges that we believe this bill can address.

On-farm anaerobic digestion projects in particular have proven to be very difficult to permit, finance, and build and have not been built despite the many economic and environmental benefits associated with nutrient management (manure) and solid food waste management solutions they offer. CFBA is pleased to see the attention paid to this technology and sees this technology as a great opportunity to support CT dairy farms that are struggling with high costs and low margins over the past five years.

We offered the following needs specific to creating a marketplace that would allow for on-farm generation projects to be successful to the Energy and Technology Committee in regards to SB 845, and would like to reiterate the need for these changes to the marketplace:

- Include a specific on-farm generation category, in addition to the current 10-megawatt aggregate;
- Allow for both the generation and sale of electricity and gas, depending on the project and region;

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• 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. By creating an on-farm generation cap, public policy could value these benefits outside of the lowest cost generation model.

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:
  o Reduced energy costs in a high energy industry
  o Ability to mitigate phosphorus run-off
  o 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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal and I would be happy to answer any questions you have.

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