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Amanda Freund  
Freund's Farm  
CowPots

Gordon Gibson  
Connecticut State Grange

Eric Hammerling  
CT Forest & Park Association

Terry Jones  
Jones Family Farms

Kip Kolesinskas  
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Nathan L'Etoile  
American Farmland Trust

Elisabeth Moore  
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Joan Nichols  
CT Farm Bureau Association

Will O'Meara  
Land for Good

Amy Paterson  
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Richard Roberts  
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Jim Smith  
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## Working Lands Alliance Policy Statement H.B. 6101 General Law Committee Public Hearing February 4, 2021

Dear Co-Chairs Maroney and D Agostino, Vice-Chairs Fonfara and Gibson, Ranking Members Witkos and Rutigliano, and members of the General Law Committee:

The Working Lands Alliance appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. 6101 An Act Concerning Various Issues Related to the Liquor Control Act

My name is Chelsea Gazillo, and I am the Director of the Working Lands Alliance (WLA), a broad-based, statewide coalition dedicated to preserving Connecticut's farmland. WLA includes farmers and such organizations as American Farmland Trust, the CT State Grange, New Connecticut Farmer Alliance, City of New Haven Food Policy Division, Connecticut Land Conservation Council and the CT Farm Bureau Association, among many others. As an Alliance, we care deeply both about saving Connecticut's farmland and ensuring a healthy agricultural sector and prosperous future for Connecticut's farmers.

In 2020, there were 47 licensed wineries in Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> As Connecticut looks at climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency strategies, encouraging and incentivizing winemakers to grow grapes could be key. According to a 2019 New York Times article, "As the climate has warmed, regions that were once considered too cold are now demonstrating that they, too, can produce fine wine, as long as the other elements are in order. In pursuit of the best sites, wine producers are moving north in the Northern Hemisphere, and south in the Southern."<sup>2</sup> This includes Connecticut.

Passing this important piece of legislation will open a new market for winemakers and increase the agricultural viability for farmers growing wine grapes across the state. Wine producers growing CT Grown grapes are important stewards of our state's working lands. They are also important drivers of local tourism and other economic activity. Over the years our state's farmland preservation program has accomplished many great things for farmers, the people of Connecticut, and our environment. By promoting and expanding the market for a CT Grown food that mitigates carbon emissions and helps adapt to climate change, our working lands can continue to be an invaluable part of what makes Connecticut a great place to live. This should continue to include those who manage our growing vineyards and wine industry.

On behalf of the Working Lands Alliance, I urge this committee to support H.B. 6101. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Chelsea Gazillo

<sup>1</sup> Gazillo, C., Guskowski, J., Kolesinskas, K., Swamy, L., 2020. Planning for Agriculture: A guide for Connecticut Municipalities. Wethersfield, CT: American Farmland Trust. [workinglandsalliance.org/resources](http://workinglandsalliance.org/resources)

<sup>2</sup> Asimov, E., How Climate Change Impacts Wine. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/14/dining/drinks/climate-change-wine.html?auth=login-email&login=email> Retrieved 2.3.2021