



April, 2023

**Will you help fight legislation
that hurts Connecticut farms
with a gift of \$50?**

Roxanne Maher
741 Colonel Ledyard Hwy
Ledyard, CT 06339

Dear Ms. Maher:

We're fighting an uphill battle....and we need you with us. Let me share some examples of legislation that has been proposed this year and in past years that irreparably harms Connecticut farms....

Providing Legal Representation to Farm Animals – This year we fought against a bill that would provide legal representation to animals through a court appointed attorney. It would not take long for this type of proposal, if implemented, to put most farms with livestock or horses out of business.

Modifications to PA 490 – Periodically when the legislature is under pressure from municipalities, they consider modifying Public Act 490 which allows municipalities to tax farmland and open space at lower rates. Many farms would be put out of business if their property was assessed at commercial or residential rates.

Elimination of the Farmer's Tax Exemption Permit – This important exemption for farmers is often targeted as a way to increase tax revenue when the state's finances are tight. Ending this benefit would add to farmers' already high input costs.

Will you join with us to fight these proposals that hurt Connecticut agriculture by making a gift of \$50?

This year's legislative session is upon us and with it comes a triple challenge:

- **Defeating** legislation that negatively impacts farming;
- **Educating** newly elected legislators about the reality of farming in Connecticut;
- **Advancing** legislation to help Connecticut farms.

Every legislative session here in Connecticut is an opportunity to create a climate and environment that supports and promotes agriculture.

Yet, this year we face two threats.....

First, we are working furiously to defeat and block legislation that hurts Connecticut agriculture.

Many initiatives are brought forward with good intentions but with little thought for the impact on agriculture. And this impact can be considerable....

Secondly, we are facing a significant challenge this legislative session with 36 new legislators seated. These 36 people have never served in the general assembly and few, if any, have little to no experience with agriculture.

Will you help block legislation that hurts Connecticut farms with a gift of \$50?

Legislators Lack Hands on Farming Experience

For many rural Connecticut families, farming is a tradition passed down through many generations.

As you know, many Connecticut farms have been family businesses for decades if not centuries with children, siblings, uncles & aunts, cousins, in-laws and more participating in the farm operations especially during harvest season.

Because almost all Connecticut farms are run by families, many Connecticut residents have had experience in the past working or helping out on farms.

Maybe they helped with haying or apple picking at the height of the season
...maybe they hoed rows of vegetables mid-summer
...maybe they worked at the retail farmstand on weekends
...maybe they picked strawberries at the beginning of the growing season

No matter the role that they played, they learned about farming.

They learned about the hard work, the long hours and commitment required to keep a farm profitable and functioning. They also learned about the beauty of a sunset over cornfield, the incredible taste of home-grown blueberries and the satisfaction of raising an animal from birth.

What came from this experience is often a hard-won appreciation for the challenges of farming – bad weather, pests, droughts, trouble finding farm help and more.

As the number of Connecticut farms has decreased, the number of residents who experience farming in any kind of way, has decreased as well.

Consequently, current state elected officials also have little to no experience with farms. They don't understand how food is grown, how challenging weather conditions can be, and how much time is required.

And these are just the basics – never mind an understanding of input costs, an awareness of market demands, developing new markets, knowledge of the myriad of state, federal and local regulations covering farming.

So when legislation affecting farms is raised, our legislators often lack a basic understanding of farming and agriculture. While their initiatives are frequently well-intentioned, the outcomes can be harmful to farms.

Will you help us reach legislators who have little farming experience? **Will you help us educate legislators about modern farming with a gift of \$50?**

Newly Elected Legislators – Learning to Govern and Learning About Farming

To further complicate matters, this legislative session includes 36 new legislators who have never served as state legislators before. So not only are they learning

the legislative process, developing relationships with staff and colleagues, developing their priorities and initiatives but they are also getting up to speed on a myriad of public policies that affect their constituents such as public health, transportation, housing issues, etc.

They need time to learn about these complex issues including agriculture and its importance in our state. CFBA is taking time to educate each and every state leader about the impact of these bills on Connecticut farms.

Will you help us educate new legislators on Connecticut agriculture with a gift of \$50?

Defeating Legislation That Harms Connecticut's Working Farms

Every legislative session brings often well-intentioned initiatives that negatively impact farms.

This year we saw a proposal to assign attorneys to represent animals in state court cases. In prior years, we have seen PA 490 under the chopping block. Even the farmers tax exempt permit has come under scrutiny.

All of these proposals would have a significant impact on the financial viability of many farms. They would impact every farm's input costs and profit margins.

We need your help to defeat legislations that hurts Connecticut farms. Will you join us with a gift of \$50?

Your Support is Needed Now

The session is in full swing with Committee hearings mostly concluded. As we write this letter, bills are being voted out of Committee and will next be debated on the floor of the House and Senate.

Our lobbyists from PennLincoln as well as our President Paul Larson and I are at the Capitol reading bills, speaking with legislators, meeting with leadership, educating legislators, testifying and more.

Your support today will make an impact on our ability to defeat legislation that hurts Connecticut farms. And just as importantly, your gift will help us advance legislation that helps Connecticut agriculture.

A Track Record of Success

Because of support from people like you, because of our reputation and because of our hard work, we have a strong track record at the Capitol. Some of our achievements have included:

- Passage of farm energy regulations that allow biogas from farm-based anaerobic digesters to be injected into natural gas pipelines;
- Expanding and amending PA 490 to include aquaculture land;
- Allocation of \$14 million for climate smart ag projects including \$7 million for farmland restoration.

When you support Connecticut Farm Bureau, your investment is in good hands.
Will you make a gift today of \$50 to support Connecticut farming?

Your Values are Our Values

I know you're someone who cares about agriculture. You care about Connecticut farming and Connecticut farm families.

You see the importance of agriculture and the impact it has on our state.

You have the insight to understand the impact the Connecticut legislature has on our farms. You understand the importance of building relationships with state legislators whose support is critical.

You understand the direct impact that the legislators can have on farming and the importance of education, farm tours, person to person conversations.

You see the value in developing long-term relationships with legislators at the Capitol and how that will benefit farmers.

Not everyone has this kind of sophisticated understanding of the legislature and its impact on agriculture the way you do.

You also understand that we are stronger together than we are apart. That the strength we have is in working together to promote agriculture.

Will you join in support of farming by making a gift of \$50 today?

As farmers and supporters of agriculture, we face some significant challenges at the Capitol this year. Will you join with us to

- **Fight** against bills that harm agriculture;
- **Advance** legislation that helps Connecticut farms;
- **Educate** Connecticut legislators about farming?

We need your support so that Connecticut farms can continue to grow and thrive.
Will you help defeat legislation that harms Connecticut farms by making a gift of \$50?

Sincerely,



Joan Nichols
Executive Director

P.S. Will you help defeat bills at the Connecticut Legislature that hurt agriculture with a gift of \$50 today?



URGENT REQUEST

Will you be a voice for Connecticut agriculture at the state capitol?

We are facing two significant challenges during this year's 2023 legislative session.....

First, we are fighting back against legislation like a recent bill that would provide attorneys to farm animals. These proposals, if implemented, would put many farms out of business. Many of these bills would reduce your profits and increase your input costs.

Second, we face a legislative body with little to no understanding of farming including 36 newly elected members.

It's tough enough to defeat anti-farm legislation. It is further complicated by legislators' lack of ag knowledge.

As the legislature brings bills to the floor of the House and Senate, Connecticut Farm Bureau is working hard to make sure that farmers' interests are protected.

Will you help fight legislation that negatively impacts Connecticut farms with a gift of \$50?

☐ **Yes, I want Connecticut farms to operate in a favorable economic climate!**

Enclosed is my gift of:

☐ \$40 ☐ \$45 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$55 ☐ \$60 ☐ \$65 ☐ \$_____

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