Lou Mansolillo

Dear House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Members,

I am writing **in support of Rep. Chippendale's bill, HB5342**, which would allow our DEM to recycle money that is collected from our farming community back to our farming community.

I grew up in RI have been working at a nonprofit based in Warwick with RI farmers for the past 3 years with incredible support from DEM Division of Agriculture to help farmers reduce stress with free mental health resources, create plans for their farm's future, access land, mediate issues, and create community and collaboration across the state. **Our funding is tenuous at best, with multiple grants frozen, and I am anticipating that I might lose my job by July.**

We are worried about both being able to continue to support our farmers, as well as our farmers being detrimentally impacted by the political funding situation at hand.

Our small but strong farming sector continues to provide our state with jobs and revenues, fresh foods, environmental benefits, scenic beauty and cultural enrichment. **Rep. Chippendale's bill does not add any costs or new taxes to our state budget but ensures that our farming community receives at least as much financial support as it gives to the state in annual fees.**

This bill is especially important now, with the freezing of many of the federal funding programs that have been supporting our farms. Estimates of the amount of federal funding that is now at risk for RI farmers is in the millions.

Respectfully yours,

Laurel Witri

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Laurel Witri
(she/hers)

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 Book time to meet with me