

Lou Mansolillo

From: Mike Roberts <mike@roots-farm.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:28 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Rep. McGaw, Michelle E.
Subject: HB 5342, SUPPORT

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.

Our farm has already directly felt the impact of the current policy, which did not allow DEM to invest personnel or resources into the Organic Certification program. Previously, DEM had provided low-cost organic certification services to farms in the state, but since DEM did not have adequate funding to continue the program AND they did not have the option to increase the fees they collected to help fund it, the certification program was shut down entirely.

The bottom line for our farm was that certification used to cost \$200 per year and now costs us \$2700 per year from another certifier.

I am writing in support of this bill in the hopes that future DEM department of Agriculture programs can have the flexibility to continue operating when faced with state budget shortfalls.

Respectfully yours,

Michael Roberts
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