



February 26, 2025

The Honorable David Bennett
Chair, House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Bennett,

We are Laura Haverland and Andrew Morley, farmers who own and operate Sweet and Salty Farm, a cheese and yogurt making dairy farm in Little Compton. We are writing in support of House Bill 5342, a measure that will improve the economic viability of Rhode Island's truly essential farms.

Most Rhode Islanders know that farming, especially in a state like Rhode Island, is a very difficult occupation, especially economically. Most Rhode Islanders also know that having farms in Rhode Island adds so much to our cultural fabric here, in addition to providing a critical backstop for food availability in times of need. That is why, in our experience, most Rhode Islanders are in favor of supporting Rhode Island farms however possible. Similarly, in our experience, most elected officials in Rhode Island express strong support for the farms in our state.

So it was with great surprise that we learned that, on balance, the state does not support its farms, but rather, when it comes to the state budget, the state relies on farms to support the state. The state charges fees to farms to support non-farming programs across the state, like paying for lavish travel for government officials and paying \$500 per hour consultants. What a wild and unexpected revelation to us!

We should begin a conversation with your committee to consider ways the state can support its critical farms, but for today we will settle for urging you to move forward with H5342, which would at least begin to bring the financial relationship between farms and the state into neutral territory. Even-stein is a fair place to start.

For the good of Rhode Island, please support this measure.

Respectfully,

Laura Haverland and Andrew Morley
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