

Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am a fiber farmer on a 45 acre historic farm in Cranston writing in support of H5534, which would allow small and urban farms to receive the same tax exemptions that large farms receive in our state.

My own journey into farming began on a farm that, being under 3 acres, did not enjoy the opportunities offered larger farms but none-the-less allowed us to be quite productive. It also afforded us the time and experience to grow and commit to a longer and larger farming life. In many ways, our first farm was a critical incubator. As you may be aware, many farms in our state are under five acres. Indeed, part of our work here on Hurricane Hill has been to lease small acreage to other farmers as we recognize both the opportunities small acreage offers and the real challenge to finding and affording farmland in our state.

We have broken up almost every farm in the state to develop housing, malls and highways. These decisions, many of them deeply flawed yet of their time, have created real challenges to our ability to be food self-reliant-an aspect of our economic health that is often overlooked. Many smaller farmers leave Rhode Island because there is very little land for them and their small farms do not qualify for the critical opportunities afforded their larger cousins. Research proves that communities that can feed (and in our farm's case clothe) themselves are healthier and more economically stable.

H5534 is a tremendous opportunity to recognize this while strengthening our truly admirable and tenacious small farm community. Please support this important bill.

Respectfully,

Drake Patten
Hurricane Hill Farm

Selling Heritage Goods
Hosting Farm Events
Raising Leicester Longwool Sheep

www.hurricanehillfarm.com

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