



April 9, 2024

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney  
Chair, House Committee on Finance  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Abney,

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 7684, a measure that will improve the economic viability of Rhode Island's truly essential small and urban farms.

We have operated our business here in Rhode Island since 2011. We can attest personally, with plenty of earned gray hair as proof, to the many challenges there are when trying to create a profitable and sustainable farming business in Rhode Island. Farming and food production has low profit margins generally, which provides little in the way of room for error. Finding small savings in many places is usually what it takes to push a farm to profitability.

Our farm is neither small nor urban. We have benefited greatly from the provisions of this bill that have been available to large and mostly rural farms for decades. The property tax relief program run by the Department of Environmental Management has encouraged landowners to lease us land on favorable terms. The sales tax exemption on certain farm equipment purchases has helped us grow our business. All of these savings and opportunities add up to help create a viable farm business.

That small and urban farms have not had the same easy access to these essential programs can be rectified with this bill.

Rhode Island needs more farms of all sizes in all places. The healthy food produced by Rhode Island's farms is critical to improving the lives of all Rhode Islanders. The help provided by this bill will meaningfully increase the economic viability of farms in Rhode Island.

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

Respectfully,

Laura Haverland and Andrew Morley  
Sweet and Salty Farm  
68 Shaw Road  
Little Compton, RI 02837  
sweetandsaltyfarm@gmail.com

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House Finance Chairman Marvin Abney:

We live on a small farm in Foster that was the birthplace of Nelson Aldrich. Our home was built in 1821, and our land has been farmed for generations.

It is essential that the farmland of Rhode Island be protected for future generations.

We request that House Bill H7775 be approved to supply desperately needed funding to Rhode Island's Conservation Districts.

Thanks very much for your assistance.

Best regards,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'J. Hunter' and the second signature on the right is 'Page Wooller'.

Jeffrey Hunter and Page Wooller  
Burgess Farm