

House Republican Press Release

June 28, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Mike Alberts Praises New Law on Farmland Preservation



State Rep. Mike Albert, R-50th District, Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret, Woodstock, said the state will take further steps to preserve northeastern Connecticut farmland under legislation signed into law by Governor M. Jodi Rell.

Rep. Alberts said, “Preserving the rural character of northeastern Connecticut from overdevelopment is a high priority of mine, the governor’s and many other elected officials,” said Rep. Alberts. “This legislation will help farmers to continue operating their farms, which are a vital part of keeping northeastern Connecticut an attractive and viable place to live and work.”

The governor signed a bill creating a 12-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to help the state bolster its efforts to preserve agricultural lands. The bill, An Act Concerning the Creation of a Farmland Preservation Advisory Board, is effective July 1.

“The Advisory Board will help us step up our preservation efforts,” Governor Rell said. “Our farmers are the clients of the state’s Farmland Preservation Program, so an Advisory Board that increases their involvement in decision making will strengthen the entire program. This law will improve communication with the farming community and boost the program’s ability to respond to farmers’ needs.”

Governor Rell noted that the goal of the state’s Farmland Preservation Program is to preserve 130,000 acres, but Connecticut is still about 100,000 acres short of that goal. Delaware and Massachusetts have set up similar committees and both states as a result have preserved more farmland.

The Board will be placed within the state Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes and will consist predominately of individuals representing the farm community. When funding exists and farmland preservation projects are pending, the new law requires the state bond commission vote on whether to authorize the issuance of unallocated bonds.

“Whether you live along the Long Island Sound, in the Litchfield Hills, in the rolling countryside here in Wallingford or in any of our cities and towns, a walk or a drive though our state in any season reminds you within moments just why you love to live here,” Governor Rell said. “By curbing sprawl, Connecticut will be able to save farmland and forests while simultaneously revitalizing older suburbs and urban centers.

“Today is a good day for the farm community in Connecticut. Today, the voice of that community - the voice of preservation - gets louder. That’s good news for our responsible growth efforts, and that’s good news for our children and our grandchildren.”