



OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

April 19, 2022

Dear Pro Tempore Balint,

I'm writing on behalf of numerous constituents from Vermont's agricultural community, specifically Vermont's vegetable and berry farmers, who have expressed to me their deep concerns with H.466 "An Act Relating to surface water withdrawals and interbasin transfers".

The bill passed the House with no testimony from Vermont's farming community and notably there weren't any fruit and vegetable growers involved in last year's study committee, despite being the group of farmers most likely to be affected by the bill.

As currently drafted, the bill includes a reporting requirement for any water withdrawal of 10,000 gallons in a single day or 150,000 gallons per month. This is a very small volume of irrigation water and the reporting requirement does not differentiate between small withdrawals from large rivers and large withdrawals from a small stream or brook. It would result in requiring the reporting of thousands of small irrigation events, whether one irrigates from our largest or smallest bodies of water.

At a time when climate change, a workforce crisis, and global food insecurity are presenting unprecedented challenges for Vermont farmers, we need to be doing all that we can to support their effort to grow food for our communities and strengthen local food systems. H.466 lacks an understanding of the daily operations of our farmers who are stewards of our land and environment. As currently drafted, this legislation puts unnecessary burdens on our Vermont farmers who are already facing an uphill climb.

I urge the Senate to give further consideration to the concerns expressed by our agricultural community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly R. Gray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Molly Gray

Vermont Lieutenant Governor

Cc:

Vermont Governor, Phil Scott

Vermont House Speaker, Jill Krowinski

Senator Christopher Bray, Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy Chair

Senator Robert Starr, Senate Committee on Agriculture Chair