

March 23, 2023

Chairman Durfee and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, Commerce and Economic Development:

My name is Josh Gaynor, I am the Vice President of Service Operations at Milton CAT. Milton CAT is the full-service Caterpillar dealer for Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, upstate New York, and Rhode Island. We have 14 locations across our territory and more than 1,000 employees that help support our more than 50,000 customers. In Vermont, we have one location in Richmond, which we service both Earthmoving and Power Systems customers. We had 48 Vermont residents employed in 2022 and that number only continues to grow. We pay more than \$1.2M of sales and payroll tax revenue that is potentially in jeopardy of leaving the state if this bill were to pass. We have major concerns and oppose to the passage of **H.B. 81 – “An act relating to fair repair of agricultural equipment”**. If H.B. 81 was to be adopted, it would have a seriously devastating impact on Vermont agriculture and forestry, our customers, the industry, State Dealers, independent repair facilities, as well as a significant impact to the economy of the State. Collectively, all taxes and wages mentioned are at risk if bill H.B. 81 pass.

Having a territory and customer base this size requires us to partner with our customers so we can both maximize our resources. To do this, we actively support and train our customers on the Caterpillar diagnostic platform, ET, and the online Service Manual platform, SIS. In addition, our customers have access to our technical help line. These platforms and services provide our customers with the information and instructions needed to test, diagnose, calibrate, and repair almost any problem that should arise.

We draw the line, however, at providing access to embedded codes that control the safety and federal EPA emissions compliance on machines. The need to access these types of features occurs in less than one percent of all the repairs we perform and in a lot of instances, involves direct communication with a factory rep in helping to define the necessary changes. If given access, an individual could override or incorrectly change the coding to disengage built-in safety features on machines such as safety levers on excavators, seat sensors, overload sensors, high pressure fuel systems, etc.

Milton CAT invests millions of dollars a year in technician training and development and tooling. We also partner with vocational and technical high schools and colleges across our territory to help promote our industry and create a pipeline to help develop and grow qualified technicians.

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While the bill before you today applies to the agricultural industry, Caterpillar equipment is used across multiple industries; Construction, Mining, Power Generation, as well as Agriculture to name a few. With everything mentioned, as well as a sense of responsibility and caution for the general public and also end user well-being, Milton CAT cannot support H.B. 81, nor do we feel there is a need for this legislation.

Sincerely,

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