

Representative Maxine Grad, Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
Representative Chip Conquest, Vice Chair
Representative Thomas Burditt, Ranking Member
Representative Selene Colburn
Representative Eileen Dickinson
Representative Kimberley Jessup
Representative Martin LaLonde
Representative Ruquaiyah Morris
Representative Barbara Rachelson
Representative Gary Viens
Representative Janssen Wilhoit

Dear Chairwoman Grad, Vice Chairman Conquest and members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

On behalf of the St. Albans Cooperative and its membership, we strenuously oppose the citizen right of action language that your committee is discussing soon. As a cooperative consisting of dairy farmers, we are unfortunately used to being subject to legislation or policies that are not needed. We also are often unnecessarily targeted by constituencies that have little to no idea about overall dairy farming practices.

The ‘citizen suit’ language that has been included in S. 260 is first and foremost, not needed. Both the Agency of Agriculture and the Agency of Natural Resources have regulations in place that deal with non-compliance issues. If the underlying concern is the respective Agency’s ability to enforce, then that is a very different issue. The Agency of Agriculture employees are regularly on all farms and are required to inspect large farms at least annually for compliance.

As dairy farmers, we are expected to adhere to rules and regulations that are very different from what other businesses do. The success of our individual business relies on the health of our land and animals. Passage of this language will be costly and time-consuming for our agricultural community.

Respectfully,

Harold J. Howrigan, Jr.
Chairman, St. Albans Cooperative Board of Directors

cc: Senator Robert Starr
Secretary Anson Tebbetts