



April 4, 2016

The Honorable Robert Haefner, Chair  
House Environment & Agriculture Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 303  
Concord, NH 03301

***Subject: SB 345, relative to the definition of agritourism***

Dear Representative Haefner:

The New Hampshire Planners Association, representing over 200 land use planning professionals in our state working at all levels of government and in the private sector, takes this opportunity to express support for SB 345, relative to the definition of agritourism.

As you are aware, farmers across New Hampshire increasingly rely on agritourism in order to maintain viability. The legislature recognized the importance of agritourism when it adopted a definition of that term in 2007. However, as the New Hampshire Supreme Court recently discussed in the case of *Forster v. Henniker*, \_\_ NH \_\_ (2015), the definition of agritourism set forth in RSA 21:34-a, VI is merely that: a definition only. Arguably, this “dangling definition” has created more confusion than anything else. The clarity that SB 345 brings to understanding what is meant by agritourism and what protections are afforded to it is reason enough to support the bill’s passage.

More than this, however, SB 345 is in fact a smart and well constructed compromise between our state’s farmers who depend on agritourism income and those in local government responsible for administering their communities’ land use regulations. On the one hand the bill directly incorporates agritourism into the statutory definitions of “farming” and “agriculture”. In doing so, activities that meet the definition of agritourism will be given the same statutory protections that are currently afforded to farming and agriculture. On the other hand, the bill allows a reasonable level of local oversight in order to address site specific concerns such as traffic, parking issues, and public safety. In providing balance, we believe that SB 345 will help to ensure the long term viability of New Hampshire’s farms while at the same time permitting the local review that may be needed to help manage the impacts from this growing sector of the agricultural economy.

For these reasons, the New Hampshire Planners Association urges your committee to recommend the passage of SB 345. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sara H. Carbonneau

Sara H. Carbonneau, Legislative Liaison  
NH Planners Association