



Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund®

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Virginia Delegate Seeks to Help Protect Farmer Rights

Falls Church, Virginia (January 7, 2013)--Virginia candidate for Lt. Governor, Delegate Scott Lingamfelter is taking up the cause of farmers and homesteaders in the state by introducing [H.B. 1430 – Guaranteeing Individual Liberty and Property Rights for Farmers](#). A press conference will be held tomorrow, Tuesday, January 8th at 11:00am in House Room 1 of the Virginia State Capitol, 1000 Bank Street, Richmond, Virginia.

The harsh treatment and sanctions meted out by overzealous regulators to a Fauquier County farmer last summer, inspired the legislation. [Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund](#) member, Martha Boneta, who runs a livestock rescue farm and farm store was threatened with \$15,000 in fines for alleged “permit” and zoning violations, even though her property was zoned agricultural and her farm store was licensed by the county. Her farm activities are typical—children’s birthday parties, pumpkin carvings and sales of heirloom vegetables, goat milk soap and alpaca, llama and sheep yarn from her farm store.

The County officials’ actions and the threat of criminal penalties have now forced Martha to close her 70-acre farm to visitors. In response, Martha filed a two million dollar lawsuit against the county for violating her constitutional rights and the Virginia Right to Farm Act. The county officials who have closed her farm to visitors have yet to set foot on her property and are acting in response to complaints from affluent landowners who are protesting the day-to-day activities of actual working farms.

Boneta is not alone in her struggles against moneyed special interest groups and county officials. Virginia wineries are currently subject to pressure and harassment over their farming activities, farm events and patronage of their farm stores.

Del. Lingamfelter, is a staunch proponent of limited government. House Bill 1430, “The Boneta Bill”, will strengthen the Virginia Right to Farm Act by expanding the definition of farming to include respect for bootstrap entrepreneurship and the American ideal of “the pursuit of happiness.” The bill also would void county ordinances that violate constitutionally protected rights on agricultural property, such as freedom of speech, assembly, the press, religion and more. It also subjects counties and their officials to possible fines and penalties for trampling on farmer-citizens’ rights. See Lingamfelter [press release](#).

Attorney, and President of the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, Pete Kennedy, says, “The Boneta Bill is a significant step towards increasing freedom and revenue for Virginia family farms; its passage will strengthen rural communities and local food systems throughout the state.”

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“Boneta Bill”, continued

Concerned members of the public and Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund in Virginia are encouraged to attend tomorrow’s press conference and write their legislators to show support for the passage of H.B. 1430. A rally will immediately follow the press conference.

Delegate Lingamfelter’s office will keep interested parties informed of the bill’s progress.

[Please sign up here to receive periodic updates as House Bill 1430 moves through the Virginia General Assembly!](#)

The Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, a 501(c)(4), defends the rights and broadens the freedoms of family farms and artisan food producers while protecting consumer access to raw milk and nutrient-dense foods. Join or donate online at <http://farmtoconsumer.org> or by calling 703-208-FARM (3276).

H.B. 1430: <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?131+ful+HB1430>

Delegate Lingamfelter’s press release:

<http://va31st.com/press-release-delegate-scott-lingamfelter-introduces-the-boneta-bill-in-response-to-property-rights-infringements-by-government/>

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