

# Rhode Island Food Security Coalition

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March 9, 2001

Honorable Lincoln D. Chafee  
505 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Chafee:

The Rhode Island Food Security Coalition urges you to become an original co-sponsor for the Northeast Dairy Compact Re-authorization Bill.

The Rhode Island Food Security Coalition meets regularly to take action on issues that affect the food security of the citizens of the state. Its membership includes representatives from state agencies, universities, farmers, private non-profit organizations, the RI Community Food Bank, anti-hunger advocates and consumers.

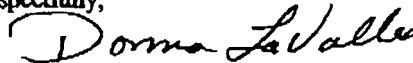
The Northeast Dairy Compact is important to the twenty-eight dairy farmers left in Rhode Island and to dairy farmers throughout New England. But, perhaps more importantly, the Dairy Compact is important to the every day milk consumer in Rhode Island. Consumers are used to having access to very fresh, very high quality milk on the shelves of their food stores in Rhode Island. This is due to having a large number of economically healthy dairy farms in the region. Milk quality deteriorates rapidly and long distance shipping of milk reduces the shelf life and the taste acceptability of that milk. Milk and milk products are a vital part of a healthy diet for all Americans. Congress needs to act now to protect the quantity, quality and affordability of milk for consumers.

The Northeast Dairy Compact is the ideal vehicle to protect the quality and quantity of milk for Rhode Islanders. It helps to stabilize the payments to farmers, which allows them to do long term planning to remain economically viable and in business. This in turn keeps milk supplies local and fresh! (Milk is generally trucked less than 200 miles to get to Rhode Island under the current system.) It prevents Rhode Island milk wholesalers from going to the Midwest for milk.

The compact was designed to benefit the consumer by improving the pricing formula of the market and by rationalizing the pricing structure of milk. Ideally the compact will reduce the price of milk to consumers. Historically the increases in the regulated price have not correlated with consumer price increases. School meal programs are reimbursed the cost of the compact and the WIC program is exempt, so re-authorizing the compact should have no impact on these nutritional programs.

Please consider co-sponsoring the Northeast Dairy Compact Re-authorization Bill.

Respectfully,



Donna LaVallee, MS, LDN  
Coordinator  
Rhode Island Food Security Coalition

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The Rhode Island Food Security Coalition is working toward: "A food secure Rhode Island where all people have access to sustainable food resources which are culturally appropriate, nutritionally adequate and safe".

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