**SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATORS**

[Date]

To [Your State Representative or Senator]

[Mailing Address and/or E-mail]

Dear [Name],

I am writing today to ask that you support the passage of Proposed Bill No. 138: An Act Modernizing the State's Cooperative Association Statutes, with NO amendments.

This commonsense legislation will bring our state’s co-operative statute, “General Statutes Title 33: Corporations; Chapter 595: Co-operative Associations,” up to date and more in line with statutes in nearby states, making it easier for entrepreneurs to form co-operative enterprises and supporting the growth of existing co-ops, while reinforcing the principle of democratic member governance, free from interference by external non-member interests.

Connecticut currently ranks among the lowest in New England in terms of the number of co-ops as a proportion of population, due in part to outdated legislation that restricts their development. For example, in contrast to other corporations, current law holds individual co-op members liable for the debts of their business. Changing this provision would put existing co-ops on an even playing field with other businesses, and encourage entrepreneurs to form new co-ops.

*Use this section to share why the growth and development of co-ops would be a benefit to the state of Connecticut.*

* *If you are a member or employee of a local co-op (for example a food co-op or credit union), share how it has benefitted you and your community. If you have served as a board member, share something positive from that experience — for example, the ability of everyday people to serve in elected leadership roles in a business that serves and benefits their community.*
* *Co-ops are locally owned by local people, making them more responsive to local needs. As we work to build stronger communities, co-ops can be a solution — if we allow them to grow!*
* *Food co-ops are drivers of local economies. For example, Connecticut’s two retail food co-ops alone sell $1.5 million in local products annually. On a regional level, the Neighboring Food Co-op Association reports that its 27 member co-ops sell over $90 million in products from local producers. What if we had more food co-ops?*
* *As a generation of baby boomer small business owners nears retirement, half of the nation’s privately-held businesses are at risk of buyout or closure. Co-ops can be a solution to this “Silver Tsunami,” preserving local businesses by selling them to their employees and community members when the owner decides to retire.*
* *Co-ops have been shown to be more resilient during economic down turns, preserving jobs and local economic activity.*
* *On a global level, there are more that 1 billion members of co-ops. According to the National Cooperative Business Association, 1 in 3 Americans are members of 65,000 co-ops. These businesses generate* *$75 billion in annual wages and$650 billion in revenue.*

I hope that I can count on your support for the passage of [Proposed Bill No. 138: An Act Modernizing the State's Cooperative Association Statutes.](https://www.cga.ct.gov/2019/TOB/s/pdf/2019SB-00138-R00-SB.PDF)

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

[Your Name, Address, Phone and E-mail]