

Statement of Massachusetts State Representative Stephen Kulik at the monthly meeting of the Northeast Dairy Compact Commission in Wenham Massachusetts on June 6, 2001

Thank you very much, we appreciate the invitation. Jay has asked me if we can give a little summary of what went on in the Statehouse last year right around this time and how we fought back. A very mysterious and well funded, well organized attack on the Compact in an attempt to begin the process of removing Massachusetts from the Compact. As Jay said, the State Senate is right now beginning its budget process, the House having completed it about a month ago. Last year at this time, as the Senate took up its budget after release by the Ways and Means Committee, that version contained language that began to remove Massachusetts from the Compact by giving a one-year notice, whatever the formal process is. This was initiated by a single senator, who represents the city of Lynn - the headquarters of West Lynn Creamery. And he was clearly doing the bidding of that corporation, which since that time has certainly been acquired by Suiza. I'm not sure if it was at that time, but it was certainly in the process of being completed and it caught us all a little bit by surprise quite frankly. I don't think we really saw this effort coming. But it clearly had the blessing of the Senate leadership and the president. If the Senate president wants something and it's in the budget, it happens. Fortunately, on the Senate side, there was a group of 14 senators - we've got 40 senators and 160 Representatives - and there were 14 members of the Senate, including some people who are close to the Senate president, whose districts were effected be the Dairy Compact positively.

The Chairman of the National Resources and Agriculture Committee over there, the Assistant Majority leader, and some other key players in the Senate, took the very courageous position of opposing their leader on this issue. What we decided to do on the House side was to try to support their efforts. We knew they weren't going to win it and they'd rather take it out of the Senate budget because they knew they didn't have the votes with only 14 out of 40. So we decided to launch a major effort in the house to support their efforts and draw attention to what was going on.

It was also a very concerted effort outside the bill. The Farm Bureau, the Conservation Law Foundation, MassPIRG - a very broad coalition under the group called the Coalition to Save the Family Farm. Suiza had hired very prominent, well-connected, public relations and lobbying folks, to work their cause in the Senate, and maybe on the House side. During the week that the budget process was going on, we conducted a very visible and vocal demonstration rally at the State House. Dan and I went through the House of Representatives with a resolution, a letter from our speakers, our leadership, and we got 105 of our colleagues from both the Republicans and the Democratic party to sign on supporting the Dairy Compact. 105 out of 160 is really remarkable. We didn't get the two representatives out of Lynn, so we'll keep working on that. But, it was a bi-partisan effort and it gave an awful lot of strength to the House members and the House leaders going into a budget conference committee. It was clear that a strong majority of the House did not want the provision contained in the senate budget to come out of

conference. And the good news is, that after a lengthy budget conference, it was not there.

Our speaker supported the Dairy Compact in the House and was also, I think, happy to add a little bit to the fires going on in the Senate. It had become a very high profile issue. In a later conversation I had with the Senate President, he was really taken by surprise I think, and regrets, actually that he stepped into this issue. He did not expect the public outcry. He didn't expect the activity in the House. He didn't expect the strong editorial support that appeared for the Compact in the same time frame in the Boston Globe and other regional papers.

So really, a very concerted political campaign for the Compact. I'm just thankful we were able to out match and out maneuver the highly paid expertise of the other side. We really did catch them by surprise. I think they were really shocked that they weren't able to get this through the budget. I'll let Dan Bosley talk about some of the things that motivated us to do that from a consumer and environmental land protection stance, because that's really what we did – decided to make the case with our urban colleagues, who clearly think Massachusetts is an urban state and that they would be able to get Massachusetts to drop the Compact that would be a major victory for Suiza because it would be a foot in the door. We really hit the consumer issue hard. As they did. They talked a lot about the money that was leaving Massachusetts, but by hammering against a large amount of the states corporations and conglomerates, I think it really hit home with many of our colleagues in urban areas who otherwise wouldn't necessarily care much about the dairy industry and land preservation and so on. It was a great effort that involved a great many people.