

June 3, 2015

Dear Senator/Assemblyperson:

New York's \$47 billion farm and food sector is a vital component of the state's economy and provides jobs for thousands of residents. Growing this important part of New York's economy requires cultivating a next generation of farmers.

One of the biggest challenges facing the next generation of farmers in New York is access to affordable farmland. Beginning farmers find themselves competing with real estate developers and others for land whose price is frequently beyond their ability to purchase. At the same time, farms being passed from one generation to the next are vulnerable to being lost to development as farm families grapple with the challenges of successfully transferring their land and businesses.

Bill A.1571/S.1824, sponsored by Assemblyman Bill Magee and Senator Patty Ritchie, would position the State of New York to be a leader in aiding the next generation of our state's farmers. The legislation would result in an inventory of state-owned farmland that could be made available to farmers and take steps to enhance access to this land for agriculture, with an emphasis on beginning farmers. It would also authorize the Department of Agriculture and Markets and Advisory Council on Agriculture to make recommendations about programs and policies that the State of New York could enact to facilitate farm transfers and access to land for next generation farmers.

Please help New York's next generation of farmers gain access to affordable farmland and succeed in our state by signing A.1571/S.1824 into law.

Sincerely,

See list of signatories on following page

cc: Alphonso David, Counsel, Office of Governor Andrew Cuomo
Patrick Hooker, Deputy Secretary for Food and Agriculture
RoAnn Destito, Commissioner, New York State Office of General Services
Richard Ball, Commissioner, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets