



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Senate Agriculture Chair Michelle Hinchey and Committee Members Call on Federal Leaders to Bring Whole Milk Back in Schools

MICHELLE HINCHEY August 1, 2023

| COMMITTEE: **AGRICULTURE**



Hinchey Authors Letter to Federal Government with Backing of NYS Senate Agriculture Committee, Urging Farm Bill to Address Whole Milk Access in Schools

**ALBANY, NY** – New York State Senate Agriculture Chair Michelle Hinchey is urging U.S. Senators and members of the New York Congressional Delegation to authorize 2% milk and whole milk in schools through the 2023 Federal Farm Bill. In a letter sent to federal

representatives on Tuesday, Hinchey requested that leaders advocate for a measure to be included in the 2023 Farm Bill that would return whole milk options to schools, effectively reversing a decision made in 2010 to remove whole milk from the National School Lunch Program as part of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. Hinchey's call to action is endorsed by members of the bipartisan New York State Senate Agriculture Committee.

**Senate Agriculture Chair Michelle Hinchey said,** "Bringing healthy, nutritious whole milk back into our schools is good for our kids and for delivering an economic boost to New York dairy farmers, who can continue to do what they love and feed our communities. I'm proud to lead an Agriculture Committee that supports bringing school whole milk access back, and I will continue urging our federal leaders to deliver a 2023 Federal Farm Bill that reflects this crucial priority for New York's farmers, families and rural communities."

**Senator George Borrello, ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said,** "I want to thank Senator Hinchey and my colleagues on the Senate Agriculture Committee for supporting the call to return 2% and whole milk to our schools. Whole milk is nature's original health drink. It is packed with calcium and essential nutrients that promote good health for children and adults of all ages. Let's give students the opportunity to choose the nutritious milk of their choice and give our dairy producers a market for all their milk varieties."

**A full copy of the letter is below.**

August 1, 2023

Dear Senators and Members of our Congressional Delegation,

We, the Chair of the New York State Senate Committee on Agriculture and the undersigned members, urge you to bring 2% and whole milk back into public schools by including a measure in the Farm Bill to give the power of choice back to school districts.

Whole milk is an excellent source of nutrition for all New Yorkers and well exceeds the benefits of fat-free and low-fat milk. The nutritional value of milk is unmatched. Whole milk contains no more than 3.5% fat, and one-third of those fatty acids are Omega-3, which have been linked to many health benefits, including improved heart health, brain health, and a lower risk of cancer. According to a January 2020 New York Times article, children who drink whole milk are 39% less likely to become overweight than those who drink lower-fat or skim milk. Now more than ever, the Federal Government must remove its restrictions on whole milk in public schools based on outdated information that doesn't consider the benefits it would provide to students.

New York is a leader in milk production. As members of the New York State Senate Agriculture Committee, it is our responsibility to ensure that our students are provided the nutritional benefits that come from whole milk - to keep both our children and our dairy industry growing healthy. In the first two years that the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 was enacted, 1.2 million fewer students drank milk with their lunch; however, they still had access to sugary, unhealthy drinks. These students lost out on the nutritional benefits milk offers and, instead, replaced it with sugary drinks that offer no nutritional value.

This would also provide a great economic boost to New York farmers and dairy producers throughout the state, strengthening our economy. New York has more than 3,500 dairy farms that produce over 15 billion pounds of milk annually. This committee urges our Federal Government to support local schools and family dairy farm businesses by including

a provision that brings 2% and whole milk back into schools through the 2023 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



Senator Michelle Hinchey, Chair

NYS Senate Agriculture Committee



Senator George Borrello, Ranking Member

NYS State Senate Agriculture Committee



Senator Rachel May, Member

NYS Senate Agriculture Committee



Senator Kevin Thomas, Member

NYS Senate Agriculture Committee



Senator John Mannion, Member

NYS Senate Agriculture Committee



Senator Lea Webb, Member

NYS Senate Agriculture Committee



Senator Pamela Helming, Member

NYS Senate Agriculture Committee

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