



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Agriculture Chairs, Rankers, and Nearly 70 State Legislators Urge Governor Hochul to Sign Cannabis Crop Rescue Act

GEORGE M. BORRELLO September 26, 2023

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Agriculture Chairs and Rankers Lead Bipartisan Letter to Hochul Calling for Legislative Action to Help Cannabis Farmers with Stockpiled Product

ALBANY, NY – A bipartisan coalition of nearly 70 New York State legislators has sent a letter to Governor Hochul urging her to provide a lifeline to struggling cannabis farmers across the state by signing the Cannabis Crop Rescue Act, S.7295A/A.7375A.

The effort was initiated by the leaders of the Agriculture Committees in the Senate and Assembly, Senate Chair Michelle Hinchey and Ranking Member George Borrello, and Assembly Chair Donna Lupardo and Ranking Member Chris Tague and comes two weeks after the legislators issued a **statement** on the issue, noting it is becoming an 'agricultural emergency.'

The legislators noted that because of the problems and delays that have plagued the launch of a legal, adult-use cannabis market, there are over 200 cannabis farmers and processors trying to sell their crops but only 23 state-licensed dispensaries open statewide. This has resulted in more than 250,000 pounds of unsold cannabis in storage and losing value by the day. More critically, it has deprived farmers of the income they expected to recoup their costs.

Senate Agriculture Chair Michelle Hinchey said, "Many New York cannabis farmers are facing dire financial straits with unsold crops from last year, and time is running out to get products to market before they expire. The Cannabis Crop Rescue Act is a vital short-term solution that needs action now, and we're grateful to have the support of a bipartisan coalition of state legislators calling for its immediate enactment into law."

Senate Agriculture Ranking Member George Borrello said, "The state's failure to establish the legal market it promised has had consequences that have fallen the heaviest on cannabis farmers, the group that can least afford them. The farmers who leveraged all their assets to cultivate these crops are facing financial disaster without intervention by the state. Every week that passes makes their situation more desperate. While signing this bill into law is not a total solution, it will provide some immediate relief and let these farmers know that they aren't forgotten."

Assembly Agriculture Chair Donna Lupardo said, “We owe a debt to our cannabis farmers, who once again took a risk to grow this crop. Many NY farmers are distressed for a number of reasons, but none more than this group. Opening a one-time window for sales to Tribal Nations will provide some financial relief, while we are working on others means of recompense. There really is no time to waste, as this crop is degrading the longer it goes unsold.”

Assembly Ranking Member Chris Tague said, “We have many cannabis farmers who have made huge investments expecting support and are now experiencing detrimental losses. Many of these farmers are going out of business due to the lack of a market, by no fault of their own. This has become an agricultural emergency that has cost farmers thousands of dollars. While I was not an early supporter of this initiative, I will always be a supporter of our farmers, regardless of the crops they raise, and I call on Governor Hochul to sign this bill immediately into law.”

A copy of the letter sent to Governor Hochul is attached.

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