



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Valesky Legislation Supporting Local Wineries and Orchards Signed Into Law

David J. Valesky

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SYRACUSE, N.Y.— Governor Paterson has signed legislation sponsored by Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) that supports growth and investment in vineyards and orchards, two major agricultural crops in New York State.

The bill streamlines an existing property tax exemption for new or replanted vineyards or orchards that proved burdensome for farmers (S.5501).

“Wineries and orchards provide substantial economic impact in Central and Upstate New York,” said Senator Valesky. “This legislation is a cost saving measure for farms, and in these difficult economic times, every dollar saved helps.”

The new or replanted property tax exemption recognizes that investing in new orchards and vineyards means the land will not produce a harvestable crop for six years. Since the application process costs money annually, the cost incurred can in fact exceed any benefit the farm obtains from the exemption.

The new law amends the process so that farms would only need to file an assessment once. Every year thereafter, owners would only need to notify the assessor of new acreage planted, making the program more cost-efficient and saving landowners money.

New York State is the second largest apple producing state in the nation, averaging 29.5 million bushels each year with a value of \$268 million. There are nearly 700 apple farms in New York employing 10,000 workers.

The New York wine industry is a growing economic force in New York state. More than 200 functioning wineries and 1,000 family-owned vineyards from the Finger Lakes to Long Island produce 100 million bottles of wine annually. The industry employs 18,000 people statewide, and produces \$500 million in aggregate gross sales and \$85 million in state and local revenue annually.

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