



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senate Passes IDC Bill to Help Increase Distribution of NY-Grown Products

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The State Senate today unanimously passed legislation sponsored by the Independent Democratic Conference that will help further expand the sale of New York State -grown agricultural products.

The measure, (S.614B), would allow the New York State Urban Development Corp./ Empire State Development Corp. to be able to extend grants and loans that will help create, or upgrade, distribution networks between New York farmers and food distributors, processors, and purchasers such as supermarkets and farmer's markets.

"We grow many great products in New York State, but there are too many roadblocks – particularly in communities like those I represent – that prevent what is grown on the farm from ending up on our kitchen table," the bill's main sponsor, Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, (D-Bronx/ Westchester), said. "This legislation will help give farmers more opportunities to move their products, as well as provide more healthy, locally grown, options to underserved neighborhoods."

The lack of solid transportation networks is one of the main barriers preventing New York produce, which is primarily grown upstate, from having greater distribution in downstate markets. For instance, only half of the produce sold at the Hunts Point Terminal Produce Market in the Bronx, which is the highest volume wholesale produce market in the U.S., is grown in New York.

This is companion legislation to S.627, which passed the Senate earlier this session. That bill allowed the UDC/ ESDC to be able to provide loans and grants that can be used to build, expand and refurbish green markets that encourage the sale of New York-grown produce.

Both bills were part of the IDC's "Preserve, Promote & Grow" plan to improve New York's agriculture economy.

"Our New York grown products are some of the state's greatest assets," said Senator David J. Valesky, (D-Oneida). "This legislation provides greater opportunities to get those products from our farms to our dinner tables across the state."

"I am committed to supporting the efforts of our farmers and this bill provides another avenue for produce grown locally to be transported to restaurants, supermarkets and schools who wish to purchase and serve New York grown fresh produce," Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Orange) said. "This is an opportunity for us to do something that not only is healthy for New York State's economy, but our residents as well."

This legislation will improve the economic health of our farms, as well as the physical health of our residents," said Senator Diane Savino, (Staten Island/ Brooklyn). "Its a win-win that I hope will become law before the end of this legislative session."

The legislation is pending in the Assembly.