



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Senator Seward Backs Farming Bills

JAMES L. SEWARD June 8, 2012

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ALBANY, 06/08/12 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I-Oneonta) today announced the introduction of legislation he is co-sponsoring that would help farmers who suffered significant crop loss due to extreme weather earlier this year. The “Family Farmers and Apple Growers Relief Act” would establish a special tax credit for farmers who experienced widespread damage and loss to their crops as a result of an extremely rare and severe frost.

**“Farmers use modern technology and new strategies to work the land but one factor is still beyond their control – the weather,”** said Senator Seward. **“Between Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee last year and late frosts this year, farmers have suffered major crop loss and assistance is needed to ensure there will be another harvest at many upstate farms.”**

Senate bill 7551, co-sponsored by Senator Seward, would establish a refundable personal income tax credit for farmers who suffered the loss of certain crops as a result of this year’s frost event at the start of the 2012 growing season.

Preliminary damage estimates indicate that New York has experienced one of the worst statewide, multi-crop losses ever witnessed in the state. Cornell’s Lake Erie Regional Research Laboratory has estimated crop losses for apples at 50 percent, cherries at 100 percent, grapes at 40 percent – 50 percent, and peaches at 90 percent. While the level of crop

loss varies based on region, elevation, and the crop's stage of growth, there is no doubt that there is a high probability that many farmers will face severe economic losses.

Senator Seward is also co-sponsoring senate bill 6778 that would improve the administration of the agricultural districts law by revising the definition of "viable agricultural land" and streamlining the process to recertify agricultural assessments.

**"This is commonsense legislation that would cut government red tape for our farmers so they can concentrate on working the land rather than filling out unnecessary paperwork,"** Seward added.

During budget negotiations this year, Senator Seward successfully led the fight to have funding included in the state budget for vital agriculture programs including the New York Rollover Protection System (ROPS) Rebate Program, the Maple Producers Association, the Farm Viability Institute and Farm Family Assistance.

**"Agriculture is our state's number one industry and a vital component of our upstate economy and way of life. Legislation that preserves our family farms and enhances agri-business is crucial and must be enacted to help the stewards of the land meet the countless challenges they face,"** Seward concluded.