



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Republicans Unveil “Grown in New York” to Strengthen Agriculture and Family Farms

DEAN G. SKELOS March 5, 2013

Growing the state’s agriculture industry and helping New York’s family farms prosper is the goal of the “Grown in New York” plan, unveiled today by Senator Patty Ritchie, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Senator Ritchie was joined at a Capitol news conference by other members of the committee, as well as leaders of the New York Farm Bureau to announce a plan to strengthen the state’s \$5.2 billion agriculture industry by expanding markets for New York-grown products, improving the bottom lines of family farms, and investing in the future of farming.

“Agriculture is New York’s leading industry, and Senate Republicans have been at the forefront of efforts to bolster agriculture and help farmers grow,” Senator Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton) said. “Over the past two years, we have worked to restore budget cuts to vital marketing, research, and educational programs farmers depend on to strengthen their bottom line. ‘Grown in New York’ is the Senate Republican plan to build on that success and help farmers grow and build for the future.”

“Our Grown in New York plan will dramatically strengthen New York’s critically important farming and agriculture sectors for years to come by reducing taxes on farmers and helping farmers expand their markets, boost productivity and increase their profitability,” Senate Republican Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “The plan would also help keep farms in the family, remove burdensome and duplicative regulations, and ensure the future success of New York farmers.”

New York Farm Bureau President Dean Norton said: "NY Farm Bureau has long held to the proven belief that when you grow New York's farms, you grow New York's economy. The efforts put forth today by Senate Republican Leader Skelos, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Ritchie and their conference colleagues will do just that. We appreciate their hard work to lower the high cost of farming to help ensure the next generation of farmers can continue the time-honored tradition of providing healthy, local food to the people of this state and the world.”

The Senate’s Grown in New York plan would:

- Reduce taxes on farmers;
- Eliminate the burdensome 18-a energy tax surcharge;
- Curtail red tape and outdated regulations;
- Improve farmers’ access to customers by expanding farmers markets and food hubs;
- Put more New York-grown products in schools and government facilities;

- Encourage the growth of New York's maple and wine industries;
- Put idled farmland back in production; and
- Improve farm safety.

Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean), Chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and a former Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said: "All across New York State, from the tip of Long Island, to the North County, to my district in Western New York, the agricultural industry is a thriving and vital component of the economy, but we need to do more to support our farms. The average age of the farmer keeps increasing. According to national statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for every one farmer under the age of 25, there are five over the age of 75. We need to cultivate younger farmers. It needs to be attractive for them to stay or enter in the agricultural industry. Also, we need to keep promoting biofuel crops through tax incentives. These crops produce green, locally-produced energy and provide many jobs to Upstate New York. This package of bills will be a boon to our state's vibrant farms."

Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) said: "We need to keep taking actions that keep our farmers competitive for the long haul. That includes encouraging our federal representatives to take every step they can to level the playing field with our Canadian neighbors who currently impose a strict and unreasonable tariff that keeps New York wines out of that potentially lucrative international market. We can't risk New York State's farmers being taxed, regulated and priced out of business. The 'Grown in New York' plan is a bold, common sense blueprint to keep New York a proud and strong agricultural state."

Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma), said: "Agriculture is New York's most important industry and one of its most diverse, impacting every individual and family in the state. The Grown in New York plan will help ease the tax burden on family farms, and eliminate the costly bureaucratic redundancies and red tape that continue to stifle growth. This is a dynamic and forward-thinking approach that recognizes the immense economic potential of agriculture and agri-business for New York State and will allow this important sector to expand and thrive for generations to come."

Senator Michael Ranzenhofer (R-C-I, Amherst) said: "As the number one industry in the state, our family farms do more than just feed New Yorkers. They are responsible for providing food for people across our nation and all over the world. Like many other energy-using businesses, the costs of doing business for many family farms is increasingly burdened by high utility bills. That is why it is imperative to repeal the 18-a assessment, lowering the cost of doing business, because when farmers prosper so does New York's economy."

Senator James L. Seward (R-C-I, Oneonta) said, "Farmers deal with countless challenges every day and initiatives that ease their financial burden while enhancing safety are vital. The Rollover Protection System (ROPS) Rebate Program fits the bill, helping retrofit over 1,100 tractors with lifesaving equipment since its inception. Tractor rollovers are the primary cause of farm fatalities, the use of ROPS and a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury by 99 percent. State support of this program can mean the difference between life and death on the farm."

Senator David J. Valesky said: “New York State produces high-quality agricultural products, and it makes perfect sense to highlight them in the thousands of restaurants across the state. The Dine: Pride of New York program will benefit the agricultural and restaurant industries, both extremely important to the state’s economy.”

JOBS AND PROGRESS – GROWN IN NEW YORK

Senate Republican Plan for a Stronger Agriculture Economy

Strengthening Family Farms by Reducing Taxes on Farmers

- > Two-percent property tax cap for farms; and
- > Reduce energy costs on farms by rejecting the Governor’s effort to extend the 18-a energy tax, and restoring the 18-a assessment back to its pre-2009 level.

Helping New York Farmers Expand Their Markets, Boost Productivity, Increase Profitability

- > Dairy: Support the Governor’s review of a state regulation that limits the size of some dairy farms;

- > Maple: Support legislation to cut burdensome regulations and expand opportunities for maple producers;
- > Farmers Markets: Urge state Department of Agriculture and Markets to commit additional resources to updating its database of New York farm markets, and make information more easily available to the public;
- > Food Hubs: Support the Governor's plan to create new "food hubs" located in growing regions of the state to facilitate access to New York City markets;
- > "Buy from the Backyard:" Support this program that sets a goal of at least 20 percent of food purchases by state and local government agencies to include locally produced items;
- > Remove Tariffs: Encourage our federal delegation, as well as Canadian officials to remove a severe tariff that restricts New York wines from being imported into Ontario;
- > Farm Breweries: Support increased funding to assist farmers in adding new crops like malt and hops for use in New York's burgeoning small batch and locally produced beer breweries;
- > Biofuel Crops: Support tax incentives for farmers to produce and use alternative, crop-based fuels; and
- > Rescue Abandoned Farmland: Provide incentives to return forest and abandoned fields to active farm producing.

Keeping Farms in the Family

- > Increase Estate Tax Threshold for farms from \$1 million to \$5 million;
- > Create Farm Savings Accounts for young people to purchase farms and to help farmers cover unexpected expenses and losses related to farming; and
- > Support continued funding of farming education and enrichment programs such as Future Farmers of America and 4H.

Removing Obstacles to Success and Cutting Red Tape for Farmers

- > Cut needless red tape for farmers, who are subject to regulation by more than 20 different federal, state and local agencies. Duplicative red tape prevents farmers from spending more time working in their fields.

Investing in the Future of Farming

- > Seek additional budgetary support for: maple promotion, the Farm Viability Institute, dairy profits teams that help farmers improve efficiency, and funds to help berry and apple growers recover from damage from storms and invasive species.

Dine: Pride of New York

> This bill would expand the current "Pride of New York" program by creating the "Dine: Pride of New York" program, allowing restaurants serving food and food products produced in New York State access to promotional materials in order to increase their exposure to consumers and promote the sale of locally grown food.

Protecting Farmers from Tractor Rollovers

> The Senate is proposing to restore funding for the Tractor Rollover Program that provides help to New York farmers to purchase and retrofit tractors with rollover protective structures (ROPS). The program rebates 70 percent of the cost of purchasing and installing the ROPS, up to \$765. Tractor accidents are the number one cause of fatalities on the farm.

Support for Dairy Producers

> New York does not set the price of milk that our dairy farmers produce, and the Senators stressed the critical need for the federal government to maintain strong support for key federal programs, such as the Dairy Production Margin Protection Program and Dairy Market Stabilization, to stabilize the milk pricing system and to support a strong dairy

industry.

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