



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

State Senator Jen Metzger's Bill Protecting Farmers from Lawsuits Brought by GMO Manufacturers Passes State Senate

JEN METZGER May 18, 2019

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE**

(Albany, NY) The State Senate this week passed a bill sponsored by Senator Jen Metzger (SD42) that will help to protect New York farmers from lawsuits involving claims of possession or use of patented genetically engineered or genetically modified organisms (GMO) without paying for them.

"Farmers should not face time-consuming and expensive lawsuits when, through no fault of their own, their crops have been contaminated by GMOs," **explained Senator Metzger.** "This bill will make it easier for farmers to defend themselves and for judges to dismiss frivolous claims."

"Protections like this for small farmers are critical," **said Nick Cipollone of Barthel's Farm in Wawarsing.** "We appreciate Senator Metzger's continued leadership."

The bill establishes an affirmative defense for lawsuits claiming damages on grounds that a party possessed or used seeds or plants that contained genetically engineered or genetically modified organisms without entering into an agreement or paying fees to the manufacturer or distributor of those products. The affirmative defense makes it easier for farmers to

defend themselves in these lawsuits by deeming suits dismissable if the farmer can demonstrate that they did not intentionally introduce GMOs into their crops.

“We applaud Senator Metzger for increasing legal protections for New York State’s farmers,” **said Andrianna Natsoulas, Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York.** “Farmers should not be held liable for unwanted and unintentional possession of GMO genetic material. Liability for contamination is the responsibility of the GMO seed manufacturer.”

Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women’s Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.

###