



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Bill to Make New York's Food Supply System More Resilient Passes Legislature

JEN METZGER July 29, 2020

| ISSUE: **FOOD SUPPLY, CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC; COVID-19, NEW YORK FARMS**



**Albany, NY...** Legislation designed to improve the resiliency of New York's food supply chain passed both houses of the State Legislature last week. The bill (A10607/[S8561A](#)) from Assemblymember Donna Lupardo and Senator Jen Metzger, the Agriculture Committee Chairs in their respective houses, would create a working group of stakeholders to provide guidance and recommendations on New York's food supply and related supply chain logistics in the wake of COVID-19.

"One of the lessons of this pandemic is the need to strengthen our regional food systems to help reduce our vulnerability to disruptions in national supply chains while also supporting

local farms and food businesses," **said Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42)**. "We need to re-evaluate state policies in light of what we've learned, build on innovative initiatives like Nourish NY, and bring new ideas to the table. This is an opportune moment that this legislation seeks to capitalize on to build back stronger and better."

"The COVID pandemic exposed a number of fundamental weaknesses in our food supply chain," **said Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (AD-123)**. "This working group will help the state's agriculture industry adapt to similar disruptions in the future. There is no reason we should ever experience the bottlenecks in processing and distribution that occurred this year, causing food to be disposed of while food pantries and grocery stores struggled to keep up."

The legislation would authorize the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, in coordination with the Commissioner of Economic Development, to establish a New York food supply working group. The group would include representatives from farming, food processing, food retail, food service, wholesalers, food transporters, labor, emergency food providers, academia, government representatives and others. Through a series of meetings and roundtables, policy recommendations would be advanced to strengthen and protect NY's food supply chain. Having passed both houses, the bill will now go to the Governor's desk for signature.

"The food supply chain in the U.S. has developed into a highly efficient, and in some cases complex, system," **said David Grusenmeyer, Executive Director of the NY Farm Viability Institute**. "Between the producers and consumers is a web of individuals and companies providing critical inputs, along with essential processing, transportation, storage, and marketing services. Disruptions can cause angst and concerns on both ends and all the way through the chain, as demonstrated by the pandemic last spring. That's why efforts like this to assess all the links in the food supply chain and foster understanding and communication between them is so important. It's sure to lead to quicker responses and fixes when things go awry."

"We are extremely grateful for Senator Metzger's and Assemblywoman Lupardo's ongoing leadership to strengthen New York agriculture and ensure expanded access to healthy food for all New Yorkers, especially at this challenging time for farmers and residents alike," **said GrowNYC President and CEO Marcel Van Ooyen**. "We look forward to working with state and city officials to make New York's food supply more resilient so that we can support farmers and increase food access to our most vulnerable citizens, now and in the future."

Throughout this pandemic, Metzger has been actively working with farms and food producers to provide assistance as they adapt to the crisis, and has bolstered initiatives like the state's farm to food bank program, Nourish NY, that support the purchase of New York farm products while at the same time addressing growing food insecurity. In June, she introduced a bill ([S8504](#)) that would double funding for the program using \$25 million of unallocated funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 or other future federal stimulus funding.

Senator Metzger has also been vocal about the need to strengthen New York's food systems in her role as Chair of the Senate's Agriculture Committee, and [in her recent COVID-19 online series](#), went into great detail on how the pandemic's disruptions to agriculture have only further illustrated the delicacy of the supply chain and the need to address it.

*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.*

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2019-S8561A

- 
- Introduced
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly

- On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
- 

Establishes a New York food supply working group

June 16, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Jen Metzger**

Do you support this bill?