



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Historic Support for Agriculture in Senate & Assembly Budgets

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ALBANY, NY — The importance of New York’s agriculture and food economy is being reflected with historic support in the State Assembly and Senate one-house budget resolutions. On Tuesday, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo and Senator Michelle Hinchey, Chairs of the Assembly and Senate Agriculture Committees, announced the details.

Senate Agriculture Chair Michelle Hinchey said, “One of the major early lessons of this pandemic was the increased recognition of agriculture’s vital importance to our state

economy and our long-term food security. This was the momentum we needed to make our case for a state spending plan that supports the essential work of our small family farmers and agricultural producers who are doing their best to keep our state's leading industry strong. Working in partnership with Assembly Agriculture Chair Donna Lupardo, we successfully advocated for millions more in funding than proposed in the Executive Budget, including critical funding for the Equitable Farm Futures Initiative, and other investments that our farmers rely on for research, marketing, technical and other assistance. We're thrilled that both the Senate and Assembly budget proposals go even further to prioritize historic investments for New York agriculture, including the first-ever independent line item for hops research and marketing and legislation to make the state's Nourish NY program permanent. In the coming weeks, we will be working to see that these key investments to bolster New York agriculture are included in the final budget."

Assembly Agriculture Chair Donna Lupardo said, "We owe a great deal to the people who produce our food. We are delivering on this obligation by making significant investments in the programs and services farmers and processors rely on. While the pandemic brought to light vulnerabilities in our food supply chain, it also heightened awareness of where our food comes from and how much we depend on those who produce and deliver it. Working with Senator Michelle Hinchey we were able to prioritize funding for vital research and development, education and outreach, agriculture development, along with several new initiatives. For too long, the needs of New York's agriculture sector have been overlooked and their vital work taken for granted. We now have an opportunity to express a renewed commitment to our farm economy through this budget proposal. This however is just the beginning of a longer effort to invest in the infrastructure and support systems our farmers need to succeed."

Both budget resolutions include \$1 billion for a new Small Business Reopening and Relief Grant Program as well as \$39 million in tax credits and deductions to aid small businesses, including farms. The Assembly and Senate also included proposed record investments for agricultural programs in their Aid to Localities bills, totaling more than \$35 million. Among the funding supported by the Assembly and Senate are restorations to important programs for Agri-Business Child Care, Cornell's Diagnostic Lab, FarmNet, New York Farm Viability Institute, American Farmland Trust, and others.

New funding is also included for an Equitable Farm Futures Initiative and Hops Research and Extension. In another victory for New York farmers and food pantries, the successful Nourish New York program is proposed to be made permanent under each house budget resolution.

"The Senate and Assembly agricultural budget proposals come through for New York's farmers filling many of the critical funding needs. The budgets address important research, marketing and conservation programs as well as continuing vital initiatives like Nourish NY and the farm workforce retention tax credit. New York Farm Bureau commends Senator Hinchey and Assembly Member Lupardo for their leadership and support, and we look forward to a strong final budget for our state's family farms," **said David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President.**

"I applaud the leadership of our Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committee chairs, Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Lupardo, for their steadfast commitment to New York's local farmers and our food system. I'm delighted that the Senate and Assembly budget proposals contain full funding for many of the critical agricultural science programs that farmers rely upon. I'm particularly excited about the inclusion of a new Cornell Small Farms Equitable

Farm Futures initiative to help ensure greater equity in education and training for new and beginning farmers. I am deeply hopeful that these priorities are included in the final budget," **said Benjamin Z. Houlton, Ronald P. Lynch Dean, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.**

"American Farmland Trust applauds the leadership of Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo for their commitment to critical state programs that support our farmers in the SFY22 one house budgets, " **said Samantha Levy, New York Policy Manager for American Farmland Trust.** "New York is facing a wide-scale intergenerational transition of farmland that threatens the future of 25% of the land that New Yorkers rely on to grow food and support local economies in the state. The Senate and Assembly's proposed increases to the Farmland for a New Generation and farmland protection programs, which work hand in hand to keep land in farming and bring a new generation onto the land, underscore a great and urgent need highlighted by the pandemic: keeping land in farming in our own backyard is the foundation of a resilient regional food system that will continue to feed all New Yorkers."

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