



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

## Legislation by Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz Making Nourish NY Program Permanent Signed by Governor Hochul

MICHELLE HINCHEY November 20, 2021

| ISSUE: **NOURISH NY**

| COMMITTEE: **AGRICULTURE**



**QUEENS, NY** – On Saturday, at the New York Hall of Science, State Senator Michelle Hinchey (D-Saugerties) and Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz (D-Queens) joined Governor Kathy Hochul for the signing of their bill ([S.4892-A/A.5781-A](#)) to make the **Nourish New York** initiative a permanent state program, effectuating a new market for upstate farmers that

matches them with emergency food providers to fight hunger and food insecurity in communities across the state.

The Nourish New York initiative was created in April of 2020 at the height of COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns and layoffs to address two separate yet connected issues: the millions of New Yorkers turning to food banks for assistance and the supply chain disruptions that left thousands of New York farmers struggling to sell their products as their main customers — schools and hospitality businesses — closed their doors. Through Nourish New York, food banks and other emergency food providers can receive state funding to purchase agricultural products directly from New York farmers, including fresh produce, meat, and dairy, which are then distributed to families and individuals in need.

Since the emergence of Nourish New York, 35 million pounds of agricultural products have been purchased from over 4,000 New York farms and 30 million meals delivered to communities across New York State. A total of \$85 million has been invested in Nourish New York to date through four rounds of state funding championed by Senator Hinchey, Assemblymember Cruz, and a coalition of supporters, including farmers, food organizations, and labor leaders.

“Nourish New York is the definition of a strong upstate/downstate partnership that brilliantly demonstrates what’s possible when we work together to deliver a life-sustaining service for New Yorkers who have fallen on hard times while simultaneously sparking food system innovation. This is what good government looks like, and I am incredibly proud that our bill to uplift this initiative as a permanent state program has finally been signed into law,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey.** “During one of the darkest moments our state has ever faced, Nourish New York was a beacon of compassionate, bipartisan support addressing the

devastating surge in food insecurity and providing upstate farmers, who were struggling to stay in business, with a new avenue to continue feeding our communities — a win-win framework in every sense of the word. It was an honor to work in partnership with Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, and Senator George Borrello to make Nourish a permanent program fixture in New York. I thank Governor Hochul for signing this important piece of legislation into law and look forward to forging more upstate/downstate coalitions to ensure that no New Yorker is left behind.”

**Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz said,** “The Covid-19 Pandemic exacerbated the hunger and food insecurity problems already plaguing many communities across the state, including thousands of families in my District. Our farms also saw their bottom line impacted when the supply chain was disrupted. Nourish NY presented a life-saving opportunity to support the food pantries caring for our neighbors while fighting for the survival of our farming community. I am proud to have pushed to allocate \$50 million to Nourish NY in this year’s budget. Additionally, together with the signing of this law, we are now ensuring the continuity of this life-saving program. It is critical that we now also strengthen our emergency food system through a yearly review included in this new law. I want to thank my sponsors and partners in this fight, Senators Hinchey and Borrello, as well as Chairwoman Lupardo and Speaker Heastie for their support. I also want to thank Governor Hochul and her team for signing this life-saving legislation and putting our communities first.”

The Hinchey/Cruz legislation charges the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, in consultation with the state Department of Health to conduct an annual review assessing the needs of the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP), which provides emergency food relief and nutrition services to food insecure populations in New York State.

The law also addresses the issue of cold storage as emergency food providers across the state have had to turn away farm products because they do not have the cold storage capacity to keep perishable food fresh. Under the new law, the Commissioner is tasked with reviewing and reporting on the need to establish a grant program to fund the purchase of cold storage equipment for emergency food providers.

“I can’t thank Senator Michelle Hinchey enough for guiding Nourish NY through the Senate Agriculture Committee and championing it with me in the Senate. I was proud to co-prime sponsor this legislation with her,” **said Senator George Borrello (R-Sunset Bay), the co-prime sponsor of the Senate legislation and ranking member of the Senate Agriculture Committee.** “The pandemic laid bare the fragile nature of our food supply chain in New York. It also gave us an opportunity to unite and address it. By strengthening the connection between New York agriculture and our food banks with a consistent, recurring program that farmers can plan for and food banks can count on, we can create a resilient program to the benefit of farms and families in need across our state.”

**Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, said,** “The Nourish NY program was essential during the height of the pandemic; keeping food on the table for tens of thousands of families, while also helping NY farmers stay in business. Matching farmers to food pantries also forged new relationships between different parts of the state, creating greater awareness and understanding. I’m grateful to the Governor and the bill sponsors for establishing Nourish NY in state law so that we can continue doing this very important work.”

**Molly Nicol, CEO of the Regional Foodbank of Northeastern New York, said,** “The Nourish New York program has been an invaluable resource to the Regional Food Bank and the people we

serve. To date, we have been able to provide 6.7 million pounds of dairy, produce, meat, and other New York grown and produced items through the program, greatly enhancing our ability to meet the nutritional needs of those in our community experiencing food insecurity. We are thrilled this program will allow us to continue supporting New York State growers and producers while providing our neighbors in need with nutritious, high-quality, local food in perpetuity. Thank you, Senator Hinchey and the New York State Senate!"

**Mary Lou and Lloyd Zimmermann of Black Horse Farms in Greene County said,** "We thank Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Cruz for their leadership on this bill to make Nourish NY a permanent state program. Last year, we supplied the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York with many of our freshly picked produce such as cabbage, kale, summer and winter squashes, and more. We've been hard at work on a project to plant our crops to coincide with their needs for the coming season. We applaud the Nourish NY program for connecting the farmer and his seasonal products with agencies that are capable of getting our food to those in need and so pleased to see this bill become law."

**Seth Cohen, President of the Capital District Area Labor Federation, said,** "Congratulations and thank you to Senator Hinchey and Assemblywoman Cruz for advocating and pushing to make Nourish NY a permanent state program. I've seen first hand the look of gratitude and relief on a mother's face as she pulls through the line of one of the dozens of food distributions the Capital District Area Labor Federation and Catholic Charities have hosted over the past year and a half. Through the Northeast Regional Food Bank our unions have helped distribute 2 million pounds of food to over 300,000 New Yorkers in the Capital District. When Governor Hochul signs this bill into law it says to me that she understands and supports the connections NY farmers have with their communities. A permanent Nourish NY program will strengthen the ties between producers and consumers."

**Sister Betsy Van Deusen of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany said,** “The Nourish NY program has provided so much fresh, wholesome food for New Yorkers from New Yorkers, it is truly a program that should be replicated across the country. Catholic Charities, the Regional Food Bank of NENY, and the Capital District Area Labor Federation, along with so many other organizations and individuals who have helped, are privileged to see our neighbors receive this food. All across NY, our tables are being spread with this extraordinary bounty and our NY farmers are supported and buoyed to care for Earth, our Home. Wholesome, fresh, beautiful, nutritious are all words we use to describe what our neighbors receive each day through the Nourish NY program. Congratulations, Senator Hinchey, for this 1000% win for NY!”

*Senator Michelle Hinchey represents the 46th Senate District, which includes Greene and Montgomery Counties and parts of Albany, Schenectady, and Ulster Counties. Senator Hinchey serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Energy and Telecommunications, Environmental Conservation, and Local Government Committees.*

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S4892A

- 
- 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

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Establishes the Nourish New York program

February 17, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Michelle Hinchey**

Do you support this bill?