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New York Senate Majority Advances Legislation to Support New York's Farmers and Encourage Community Engagement with Agriculture

(Albany, N.Y.) Today, the Senate Majority passed a package of bills to support farmers and agriculture communities across New York State. The legislation in this package aims to support our state's current farmers while also empowering new, prospective farmers and youth with the tools and resources they need to carry on thriving farming operations for generations to come.

The bills being passed would establish a youth program to provide students with information about hands-on experience with the agricultural industry, create a farm ownership succession planning program to facilitate the transfer of farming operations, expand regional farmers' markets, implement carbon farming tax credits, and widen property tax exemption eligibility for farm buildings.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "The Senate Majority is deeply invested in supporting our state's farmers while simultaneously finding ways to create more opportunities for future generations to enter into the agricultural industry and help ensure our state's food security. Across every part of New York State, agriculture significantly shapes our lives, health, economies and communities. I want to thank Senator Michelle Hinchey, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and the bill sponsors for their dedicated work and continuing to connect our state's communities with their agriculture roots."

Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Michelle Hinchey said, "Agriculture is one of New York's greatest strengths, and by protecting local farms, we protect our food supply and support a foundational aspect of our statewide economy. I'm proud to help advance this legislative package put forward by our Senate Majority, which reflects our commitment to fighting for New York farmers and expanding access to food for all New Yorkers. In this moment of severe economic pressure, climate unpredictability, and rising demand for local food, this work has never been more important. I thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and my legislative colleagues for their partnership in prioritizing support for New York agriculture."

The legislation being passed by the Senate Majority includes:

- **Establishes a NYS Youth in Agriculture & Entrepreneurship Summer Employment Program:** This bill, [S.592](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, would require the Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM) to establish the New York State Youth in

Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Summer Employment Program to provide students with the opportunity to be educated on the agricultural industry as well as gain agricultural and entrepreneurship work experience.

- **Expands Property Tax Exemptions for Farm Buildings:** This bill, [S.3665](#), sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey, would expand the property tax exemption to include on-farm buildings and structures, used for processing of crops produced on farm.
- **Farm Ownership Succession Planning Program:** This bill, [S.4755](#), sponsored by Senator Jamaal Bailey, would establish the Farm Ownership Succession Planning Program (FOSPP) to provide farmers and prospective farmers with a succession planning toolkit that can be used by farm owners who plan on retiring, selling or ending their farming operations to ensure such operations can be taken over by new owners. In addition, this bill would establish a taskforce to assist the program with outreach to minority communities to help increase the number of minority farm owners in New York State.
- **Carbon Farming Tax Credit for Farmers:** This bill, [S.1529](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, establishes a tax credit for farmers who maximize carbon sequestration potential through a "carbon farming" land management strategy and directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to develop regulations related to certifying the amount of carbon sequestered or emissions reduced. This would create a new financial incentive for land management practices undertaken by farmers which help improve soil health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, making New York a leader in promoting new agricultural strategies that combat climate change.
- **Establishing and Expanding Regional Farmers' Markets:** This bill, [S.6848](#), sponsored by Senator Lea Webb, would direct the department of agriculture and markets to increase the number of regional farmers' markets for the direct marketing and promotion of healthy, locally produced farm and food products produced in the state.

Bill Sponsor Senator Jamaal Bailey said, "This legislative package is designed to improve the culture of agriculture throughout the state for generations to come. Bill S.4755 ensures that the hard work of today's farmers doesn't end with retirement — it creates a bridge to the future by supporting farm succession and empowering a more diverse next generation of agricultural leaders. This legislation aims to bring together all available resources and relevant regulations into a comprehensive toolkit designed to help current and future farmers better understand their choices, potential risks, and possible opportunities. Thank you to Majority Leader, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Senate Chair of the Agriculture Committee, Michelle Hinchey, for your leadership."

Bill Sponsor Senator Kevin Parker said, "New York's farmers play a large role as stewards of the land. This legislation is a testament to my commitment to supporting agricultural communities while addressing the urgent climate crisis. The Carbon Farming Tax Credit is a forward-thinking initiative that not only honors the legacy of our farmers but also provides them with the tools to lead in the fight against climate change. By improving soil health and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this bill is a victory for farmers, the environment, and our collective future."

Bill Sponsor Senator Lea Webb said, “Farmers are the heart of our communities in the Southern Tier, feeding our families and growing our economy. Thank you to Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and Agriculture Chair Senator Michelle Hinchey for advancing this legislative package in support of New York's farmers and our agriculture sector. My bill (S.6848) will help establish or expand existing regional farmers' markets in those areas of the state that have poor consumer access to high quality and reasonably priced fresh food and farm products. Our farmers are essential, and I am committed to ensuring their success.”

Associate Dean for Land Grant Affairs for Cornell CALS Julie Suarez said, “Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senator Hinchey and her colleagues consistently provide an excellent voice in Albany for family farmers, from those farming in rural landscapes to those farming in our cities. Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences recognizes both the deep responsibility and the incredible privilege of being New York State’s land-grant partner for almost 160 years, and we look forward to working together to meet the goals of these initiatives — supporting beginning farmers, ensuring everyone has access to healthy, local food, and finding opportunities for our family farmers to be both economically and environmentally sustainable.”

New York Farm Bureau President David Fisher said, “New York Farm Bureau supports the passage of these agriculturally related bills including legislation that supports farm succession planning, expanding market access for farmers, and amending the real property tax exemption for new farm buildings to include buildings used for on-farm processing. We also support legislation establishing a tax credit for farmers who have long practiced land management strategies, such as no-till farming, crop rotation, and cover cropping techniques. Thank you to the Senate for passing this legislation and supporting the ability of New York farmers to provide locally produced food for New York communities.”

Northeast Dairy Producers Association Chair Keith Kimball said, “The viability of family dairy farms is critical to our rural economies, food security, and the health of all New Yorkers. This Farm Package is one of many important steps being taken to protect and invest in farmland and strengthen New York’s dairy industry — from field, to farm, to processor. We appreciate Senate Ag Committee Chair Hinchey and her colleagues’ efforts to support the next generation of farmers, the ongoing science-based environmental stewardship practices on farms, and increased access to nutritious dairy products in every corner of this state.”

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