

NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE



SENATOR RACHEL MAY  
53<sup>RD</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

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## **Senator May Announces Legislation to Expand the State’s Grown and Certified Program to Textile Products like Wool and Hemp**

**Syracuse, NY** - Senator Rachel May (D-Onondaga, Madison, Oneida) has introduced legislation to expand the state’s [Grown and Certified Program](#) to include fiber-based textile manufacturers. The bill ([S.3396](#)) would enable animal and plant-based fiber products, including wool, alpaca, cashmere, hemp, and linen, to receive the state’s coveted seal of approval. The bill was reported from the Agriculture Committee this week.

The New York Grown and Certified program was started by Governor Andrew Cuomo in 2016 to raise the profile of New York farm products and encourage development of local supply chains. Brand recognition of NY-based products has elevated markets for items ranging from maple syrup to cheese, yogurt, beer, and even Christmas trees and firewood. Senator May believes products made from wool, hemp and other local plant and animal fibers should also be made eligible for the program.

“The nation saw last month how much attention Sen. Bernie Sanders garnered for his Vermont-made mittens, and it is high time for New York to show similar support for our state’s producers of homegrown clothing and other fiber products,” **said Senator May**. “New York’s textile manufacturers are eager to showcase their high-quality products in the Grown and Certified Program, and consumers increasingly value the opportunity to purchase local products. The boom in industrial hemp and the growing interest in sheep and alpaca farming are trends we should reward and encourage, and the hope is that this new opportunity will also enhance connections between New York growers, processors, and producers of finished items. As an avid knitter and amateur fiber artist myself, I can’t wait to see our own prominent citizens sporting New York Grown and Certified fashions.”

“New York is uniquely positioned as one of only two states in the country where it is possible to build a full scale and commercially viable farm-to-fabric supply chain,” **said Mary Jeanne Packer, founder of Battenkill Fibers Carding & Spinning Mill in Greenwich, NY, and**

**Secretary of the Empire Sheep Producers Association.** "New York State is a perfect example of the 'Fibershed concept.' New York has farms for sheep, alpacas, hemp and other fiber/materials. New York has the primary processing mills including my business Battenkill Fibers Carding and Spinning Mill in Greenwich, NY. New York has the designers and makers in New York City fashion houses, start-up design incubators, and other value-added facilities from Binghamton to Queens and back to Schenectady. Coming together across the supply chain to support a New York State brand for fiber products makes tremendous sense."

New York also has markets for the products at all stages of development, including the largest annual sheep and wool festival in the United States, held at Dutchess County Fairgrounds every October. New York Grown and Certified products are showcased at the many Taste NY boutiques around the state and at the New York State Fair, as well as getting promotion and exposure from the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

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