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STATEMENT FROM SENATOR GEORGE BORRELLO ON URGENCY TO FIX ADMINISTRATIVE ERROR IMPACTING NOURISH NY

ALBANY – Senator George Borrello issued a statement today regarding his sponsorship of critical legislation that will fix a problem that has emerged regarding the distribution of Nourish NY funds to regional food banks due to a misguided administrative action by the Department of Health.

Senator Borrello helped spearhead the effort to make Nourish NY a permanent state program, through his advocacy and sponsorship of legislation in 2021 codifying the program into law.

“The effort to establish the COVID-era farm-to-food bank program Nourish NY as a recurring state program was driven by a desire to help food insecure New Yorkers and struggling farmers. This innovative effort established a process for our state’s regional food banks to purchase healthy and fresh New York State-sourced dairy, meats and produce for families in need with state funding. I was proud to be one of the champions of this effort.

Both the funding and operational processes were working well until September 2022 when the Department of Health unexpectedly merged the Nourish NY funding with the funding for the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP), without any explanation or warning. The resulting Request for Funding (RFA) process was terribly flawed and did not account for the vastly different purpose, guidelines and eligibility of each program. This led to steep funding cuts for some regional food banks, which is unacceptable.

Nourish NY is one of those rare policy initiatives that was a ‘win’ for everyone. We cannot let a botched administrative action undermine its ability to help food insecure New Yorkers and our farmers. That is why I am co-sponsoring [Senate Bill 7533](#), which would fix this error by clarifying that all Nourish NY funds are to be allocated to regional food banks, as originally intended. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this critically needed legislation before we adjourn.”

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