

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 22, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jonathan Monfiletto – 315-568-9816

## **Senator Helming Supports Bill to Help Farmers, Farm Workers**

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that the New York State Senate passed a bill that she co-sponsors to double the existing Farm Workforce Retention Credit to help farmers keep a steady workforce. Additionally, Senator Helming joined her Senate colleagues in unanimously supporting measures that would provide a tax credit to help dairy farmers invest in facilities and equipment and create a 10 percent discount on New York State Thruway tolls for trucks transporting food produced by farms. Many local dairy farms are struggling with falling milk prices and rising costs.

“From dairy farms in Seneca County to fruit farms in Wayne County and many more in between, agriculture is the top industry in our region. Supporting agriculture remains one of my foremost priorities. Throughout our communities and across New York State, farmers help our economy grow and thrive by creating local jobs and producing goods that are sold here at home and throughout the world. I will do everything I can to support our farmers and the agribusiness industry, and these three bills are a good start. I am proud to join with my Senate colleagues in passing these bills, and I look forward to continuing to find ways to help our farmers succeed,” Senator Helming said.

The passage of measures to protect New York State’s farm families and preserve agriculture as one of the state’s leading industries coincided with Agriculture Day, which brought nearly 30 businesses to the State Capitol to highlight products grown in New York. Also, June is National Dairy Month, which highlights the important role dairy farmers play within the overall agriculture industry and promotes milk-based products that provide nutrient-rich foods. Senator Helming led the fight to restore \$20 million in the Governor’s cuts for a total of \$54.4 million in funding in this year’s state budget for research, education, environmental stewardship, and health protections.

Last year’s state budget created a Farm Workforce Retention Credit that allows eligible farm employers to claim a refundable tax credit for each farm employee that is employed for 500 or more hours each year. Senator Helming co-sponsors a bill (S.2905A) that would double the available credit for current and future tax years to \$600 per eligible farm employee in 2018, \$800 in 2019, \$1,000 in 2020, and \$1,200 in 2021. The Farm Workforce Retention Credit provides

relief to farmers who are incurring increased expenses through minimum wage raises over the next five years.

Senator Helming voted in favor of a bill (S.7851) that would provide a tax credit for dairy farmers to encourage them to invest in facilities and equipment that allow them to take advantage of a growing demand for value-added dairy products. These products include flavored drinks, yogurts, and other products that are in wide demand around the state, especially in growing ethnic minority communities within the state.

Senator Helming also voted in favor of a bill (S.890) that would create a 10 percent discount on New York State Thruway tolls for trucks transporting food produced by farms. This would help farmers struggling with rising costs by allowing single-unit trucks and other larger vehicles to transport food and other produce to grocery stores across the state at a lower cost.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

###