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March 4, 2021

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: County Fairs

Dear Governor Cuomo:

While I welcome your recent announcement on the state expanding the allowable capacity for event, arts and entertainment venues beginning April 2, as well as your previous announcement on reopening outdoor amusement parks, I would like to take this opportunity to call your attention to the need to expeditiously provide guidance for the reopening of fairgrounds, especially for our State's celebrated county fairs. These fairs require months of planning during the best of times, and with the challenges posed by COVID-19 and mitigation requirements, they will need all the time they can get to ensure they can comply with any State requirements and safely operate.

Last year, we were all saddened at the news that our local county fairs would be canceled, but we understood this precaution was taken at a time when we had limited means of preventing the spread of COVID-19 beyond limiting social gatherings. However, now with the vaccine rollout underway and the President recently announcing that he expects the country to have sufficient vaccine doses for all adult Americans by the end of May, I am confident that our county fairs will be able to safely operate this summer under appropriate guidance. New Yorkers have sacrificed so much over the course of the last year to flatten the curve, and your recent actions to resume certain outdoor recreational activities recognizes the importance of these social gatherings to the well-being of New Yorkers. Just as operations such as amusement parks will be able to safely resume their operations, our agricultural fairs will be able to do so as well.

Our State's more than 50 county fairs are particularly of importance for a multitude of reasons. Not only do they promote our robust agricultural industry in New York, along with horticulture and domestic arts, they promote education and boost small businesses and the tourism industry in their host communities. The community I represent is proud to boast the Dutchess County Fair, which brings in nearly half a million people each year and has been attended by the likes of Presidents Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. I

can assure you that the organizers and fairgoers alike are eager to celebrate what will be the 175th celebration of the Dutchess County Fair, and the impact this event will have on our community is immeasurable.

Even with the cancelation of last year's fairs, several fairs moved to virtual platforms to host livestock shows and auctions to benefit 4-H youth. New York's fair competitors, exhibitors and fairgoers are tough and are more than capable of adapting to appropriate safety measures to ensure that our State does not miss out on fairs for another year, so long as the State provides them sufficient time to adjust to appropriate guidelines.

Respectfully, I urge you to prioritize releasing guidance for these fairs to allow them ample opportunity to plan accordingly, and so that they can safely put on the festivities that countless New Yorkers enjoy each year. Further delay may not only result in their cancelation this year, but indefinitely, and as we look to rebuild and recover, we must take all necessary steps to preserve these proven economic drivers.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter, and I look forward to working with you on this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Serino". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sue Serino
41st District