

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



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May 2, 2021

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

Re: County Fairs Follow-Up

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing as a follow-up to my March 4 letter requesting that you provide guidance for the reopening of fairgrounds, and in particular our State's county fairs. On April 26, you announced that the New York State Fair will return this summer. While this is welcome news for New Yorkers across the State who enjoy this great event—as well as local businesses that benefit from the increased draw of visitors—there are millions of New Yorkers who also attend our State's incredible county fairs, many of whom live hours from the site of the State Fair and will otherwise not be able to attend a fair this summer without a similar return of county fairs. As you said in your announcement, “the Fair must go on,” and this should apply to our county fairs as well, and it is critical that fairground staff, vendors, competitors and fairgoers themselves have ample time to plan these fairs in advance to ensure they can safely host these remarkable events that so many New Yorkers look forward to each year.

New York State is fortunate to boast multiple county fairs that have recently found themselves joining the New York State Fair itself on the list of the top 50 largest fairs in the country—including the Dutchess County Fair, which is located in the district I am proud to represent. While fairs were cancelled last year at a time when our ability to combat the COVID-19 pandemic was limited, we now have significant tools at our disposal. New Yorkers have sacrificed so much since the start of the pandemic and have been doing a remarkable job in doing what is necessary to stop the spread. If it is safe to open the State Fair, the same should be true for these smaller, local fairs.

These fairs have long been an integral part of their respective communities, connecting locals, small businesses, and visitors alike with the communities' agricultural heritage, as well as with one other. Unfortunately, the State Fair is located more than three hours away for many of the members of my community, and those living downstate have even farther to travel. Allowing local county fairs to operate will grant greater access to more New Yorkers to participate in this seasonal tradition and enjoy the benefits of

New York reopening. Furthermore, given that the current plan is to limit the State Fair to 50% capacity, allowing more fairs to operate is a common sense move to meet what could very well be an increased demand as New Yorkers, who all missed out on fairs last year, seek to return to a degree of normalcy.

Operating these fairs requires a tremendous deal of planning in the most ordinary of times, and the logistics of such planning are further complicated by COVID-19. As such, it is essential that you expeditiously work to provide guidance for these fairs to reopen so that they have sufficient time to plan to do so in a safe manner.

I appreciate your time and attention to this matter, and I look forward to working with you to ensure the return of this longstanding seasonal tradition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Serino".

Senator Sue Serino  
41st District