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COMMITTEE MEMBER
INSURANCE
ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**ROBERT G. ORTT
SENATOR, 62ND DISTRICT**

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March 11, 2019

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Jen Metzger, Agriculture Committee Chair
Legislative Office Building Room 817
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Jessica Ramos
Legislative Office Building Room 946
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Leader Stewart-Cousins, Chairwoman Metzger, and Senator Ramos:

The Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act (S. 2837 – Ramos) has drawn the attention of many New Yorkers, and our offices are frequently contacted about this issue. Before the Senate considers this legislation, we urge you to gather significant public input on this issue from across the broad constituencies that it will dramatically affect.

The agriculture industry has long been a staple of the state's economy. Unfortunately, it is getting harder for farmers to make a living in New York. Agriculture figures show that our state is rapidly losing farms, with 20 percent of our dairy farms closing in the last five years. We simply cannot allow this trend to continue.

It is imperative that any sweeping changes to our state's agriculture industry are changes that can assist our farmers – not changes that make owning a farm more difficult. An independent study by Farm Credit East estimates that this legislation would add at least \$299 million of costs on the backs of our farmers, which would reduce net farm income by 23 percent.

As you know, collecting stakeholder input is an invaluable piece of the legislative process. We urge you to host public forums in rural communities to discuss this issue with residents in all corners of our state. This legislation would have a significant impact on farmers, agri-business, tourism, and consumers. There will also be an undeniable reduction in the number of workers who are employed, which will dramatically affect the labor market, farm workers, and their families.

For the aforementioned reasons, we believe that it is essential that the Legislature make every effort to hear how this legislation would impact New Yorkers.

Sincerely,



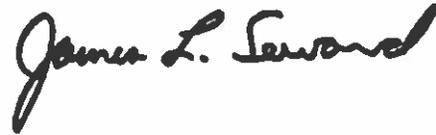
Robert G. Ortt
Senator, 62nd District
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture



Fred Akshar
Senator, 52nd District



Daphne Jordan
State Senator, 43rd District



James L. Seward
State Senator, 51st District



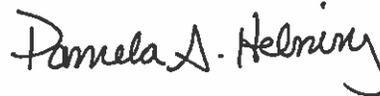
Robert E. Antonacci
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State Senator, 48th District



Patrick M. Gallivan
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State Senator, 54th District



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