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## NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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# Senate Majority to Advance Legislation to Support New York's Farmers

(Albany, NY) Today, the Senate Democratic Majority will pass a package of legislation that aims to support farmers and food producers around New York State. The bills passed establish the Office of Urban Agriculture to support urban farming, expand the definition of land use in agricultural production, establish a farming hotline to help connect farmers to resources to expand their farming operations, create procurement goals for New York State products purchased by state agencies, expand regional farmers' markets, and establish carbon farming tax credits.

"Farmers have always served as the backbone of America and they have always played an important role in New York State," **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. "I am proud of the Senate Majority for putting forth and passing this legislation that reaffirms our commitment to the people who produce our food. From every corner of New York State, agriculture plays an important role in our lives as well as economy, and is something we must always make an effort to protect and support. I thank Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Michelle Hinchey, and the bill sponsors for their work on this important legislation"

**Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Michelle Hinchey**, said, "Every facet of our lives leads back to the success of agriculture, from the New York-grown food that sustains us to the state of our economy to the power of American manufacturing. Keeping New York farmers farming is a fundamental priority of our Senate Majority, and I'm proud to help champion this robust legislative package, which will greatly expand access to healthy, locally-sourced food for all New Yorkers, strengthen agriculture's vital role in the fight against the Climate Crisis, and create new avenues of support to bolster the financial standing of farms across New York State. I thank my colleagues for their partnership in protecting our homegrown food supply and the farmers who produce it."

The legislation being passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **The Office of Urban Agriculture:** This bill, S2415, sponsored by Senator Jamaal Bailey would establish an Office of Urban Agriculture to assist with and promote various forms

of urban farming throughout the state. This office would support and help facilitate various efforts to create and uphold urban agriculture structures around New York.

- **Agricultural Land Use:** This bill, S1056-A, sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey expands the definition of "land used in agricultural production" to allow start-up, beginning, and small farms that are in production of the sale of crops, livestock or livestock products to receive an agricultural assessment if the farm is able to establish they have the ability to meet the currently required annual gross sales value within a certain timeframe. This bill provides these farmers an opportunity to receive this tax benefit, protect their land, and connect them with the resources needed to ensure success.
- **Farming Hotline:** This bill, S2236, sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey would establish a farming hotline with the Cornell Cooperative Extension. This would serve as a one stop hotline to connect farmers with information and support on needs, including, tax credit programs, beginning farmer loans, and sustainable practices.
- **Procurement Goals for New York State:** This bill, S3125, sponsored by Senator Michelle Hinchey would establish procurement goals for New York State food products purchased by state agencies which will incentivize these agencies to strengthen and expand local farm and food economies throughout the state.
- **Expansion of Regional Farmers' Markets:** This bill, S1365, sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy directs the Department of Agriculture and Markets to increase the number of regional farmers' markets for the direct marketing of foods and produce in the state.
- **Carbon Farming Tax Credit For Farmers:** This bill, S4270, sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker establishes a tax credit for farmers who maximize carbon sequestration potential through a "carbon farming" land management strategy and directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to develop regulations related to certifying the amount of carbon sequestered or emissions reduced. This would create a new financial incentive for land management practices undertaken by farmers which help improve soil health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, making New York a leader in promoting new agricultural strategies that combat climate change.
- **Craft Beverage Permit:** This bill, S2722, sponsored by Senator James Skoufis, establishes a new temporary New York craft beverage permit allowing all farm alcohol producers to sell their products at a special event.

**Bill Sponsor Senator Jamaal Bailey** said, "All New Yorkers should be able to easily access affordable fresh food, regardless of where they live. From the Bronx to Mount Vernon, this crucial legislation will help advance sustainability and resiliency, promote job creation, and improve access to low-cost, locally sourced food while reducing the environmental impact of our food system. I am proud to sponsor S2415 which will create the Office of Urban Agriculture to promote urban farming and serve our communities with a myriad of health, educational, environmental, economic, and social benefits for years to come. I want to thank my colleagues in the State Senate for advancing this legislative package to strengthen and support local agriculture systems across the state."

**Bill Sponsor Senator Tim Kennedy** said "Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and the Democratic Conference continue to prioritize efforts to streamline New Yorkers' access to fresh, healthy food, and this package accelerates those opportunities statewide. I'm proud to sponsor a

bill in this package that not only supports the farms and food producers that make this state great, but will also help to eliminate food deserts that exist all too frequently in New York."

**Bill Sponsor Senator James Skoufis** said "Farmers and food producers are a cornerstone of New York's economy and it is our responsibility in the Senate to support and promote farming throughout our state. It is also important we work to pass legislation that removes any barriers to success and expands accessibility. That is why I am proud to sponsor S2722, which will create equity and fairness for those in the craft beverage industry by providing the ability to apply for specific permits that are currently only available to wine and beer producers. I want to thank the Majority Leader for all of her efforts to support New York farmers and pass legislation that gives them the tools to succeed."

**David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President and dairy farmer**, said, "New York Farm Bureau thanks Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senator Hinchey, and their colleagues for focusing on agriculture in this latest package of legislation. It is imperative that we work together to expand opportunities for our farmers. We have one of the most diverse agricultural sectors in the country, and we need to maintain that strong connection to local production which benefits our food system, economy, and overall quality of life in New York State."

**Mikaela Perry, New York Policy Manager, American Farmland Trust**, said, "American Farmland Trust applauds the NY State Senate for their continued support of agriculture, farmers, and farmland across the state. This package of legislation will not only benefit farmers and producers, but also consumers and the environment. We look forward to continuing this critical work with our champions in the legislature."

**Julie Suarez, Associate Dean for Land Grant Affairs at Cornell CALS**, said, "Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences works to find science based solutions to help New York's farm and food system succeed. It's lovely to see the Senate Majority, with the leadership of Senator Hinchey as the Senate Agriculture Committee Chair, continue its focus on increasing opportunities for New York farmers in both urban and rural areas to sell into New York markets, and to help provide farmers with additional tools to support climate resiliency and carbon sequestration."

**Northeast Dairy Producers Association Chair Keith Kimball** said, "Now in its 30th year, NEDPA remains committed to ensuring we have an economically viable dairy industry while remaining laser-focused on environmental stewardship. We thank Senate Leadership for recognizing that our family dairy farms are part of the solution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and curbing climate change. The Carbon Farming Act will support the best management practices that have been in place on our dairy farms for generations and encourage the industry's continued commitment to research and development around soil health practices and water quality. As we continue to face shrinking margins in a competitive and national market, NEDPA also thanks Senate Leadership for ensuring that state agencies purchase more local milk and food from New York's family farms – investments that will support the entire agriculture industry and our upstate economies. We look forward to working together with our partners in the Senate to continue identifying opportunities to protect food security and support the future of farming in the Empire State."

**Colleen Klein, Executive Director of the New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association**, said, “The New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association applauds the Senate for advancing this legislative package which will bolster New York's agriculture industry. Farms are the lifeblood of so many communities across the state, making important economic, environmental, and cultural contributions. Efforts like this reinforce the Senate's commitment to ensuring the long-term success of our farms in which all New Yorkers depend on.”

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