

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Sen. Helming's Bill Bringing Relief to Small Farms Advances in Committee

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that a bill she sponsors to establish a small farm disaster recovery grant program has advanced through the Senate Agriculture Committee. The legislation, if passed, will provide financial relief to small farms that have been affected by natural disasters. The Committee, of which Senator Helming is a member, approved the bill and has now sent it to the full Senate for a vote. A similar bill in the Assembly, sponsored by Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, has been referred to that house's Agriculture Committee.

"The flash flooding that hit southern Seneca County and surrounding communities last summer is a perfect example of why we need this important legislation. This disaster damaged local homes and devastated our families and our communities. It impacted our farmers in a region whose economy largely depends on agriculture. All farmers are vulnerable to the forces of nature, but for our small farmers, one natural disaster could wipe out their crops and their entire livelihood. It was a pleasure to work with my fellow Committee members to advance this critical legislation, and I look forward to bringing it before all of my Senate colleagues for a vote," Senator Helming said.

The legislation (S.271) establishes a small farm disaster recovery grant program that would be administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Empire State Development Corporation. The program would provide financial relief to small farms that have been affected by natural disasters with grant awards of up to \$10,000. The bill defines small farms as a farm that sells produce and has annual sales of \$100,000 or less. Grants will be used specifically to purchase and replant crops that have been destroyed by a natural disaster.

Seneca County Farm Bureau President Ann Marie Heizmann said, "We thank Senator Helming for advancing this piece of legislation to help our small farmers who are the most vulnerable. Her support of our small farmers is greatly appreciated. Unlike larger farms, many small farms do not have crop insurance. A natural disaster could damage their crop, livestock, equipment, and infrastructure. This program will help small farmers survive these events."

Senator Helming represents the 54th 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.

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