

Della Miller

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Subject:

Written Statement in Support of Black Farmers United and 9 Solutions.

I would like to present this written statement on behalf of **Black Farmers United/NYS** and to advocate for food justice and sovereignty.

My name is Della Miller, I am a professional, working in the area of urban gardening, food, nutrition and health education and a resident and voter in Buffalo, New York.

In order to institute systemic change in support of Black Farmers and Urban growers statewide, I personally support Black Farmers United/New York State (BFU/NYS). I am the voice for many other residents who could not be here who also stand by BFU/NYS's,

"9 Solutions for Racial Inequity in New York State Agriculture".

These 9 solutions are some of the essential steps to bring about Farm to Food systems equality.

I have experienced various unfair farm/food practices in my 70 plus years. There has always been unfair food practices in black communities. However, this current "injustice" system, is growing every day. This system is running rampant, hurting Black farmers, trickling down to black communities and many others. This current system must be changed. I would like to see:

1. Equal access to farmer financial assistance, directly to each and every black farmer
2. Include Black Farmers, Black Urban growers and other food related entities into the current statewide network.
3. Provide to current and future farmers and urban growers, education on all levels, training and mentoring,

We must move forward and bring about food system equality, by putting into action the **Black Farmers United/NYS, 9 Solutions** presented.

Make communities more sustainable - A more equitable New York State

Thank You for the opportunity to give written testimony

Black Farmers United-NYS 9 Solutions

Solution #1

Pathways for Black guest workers, migrant workers, and undocumented farmworkers to become business-owning “products”.

Solution #2

\$10 million for the Black Farmers Fund of New York, a nonprofit investment vehicle that provides start-up capital to farms and food businesses in the Black community. This resource is for our collective work, to be shared among NY Black farming organizations.

Solution #3

400 acres to the Northeast Farmer of Color Land Trust, which provides affordable land access to Indigenous and Black farmers and earthkeepers in New York and New England.

Solution #4

An “endowed chair” at Cornell so that we can create a certificate program with experienced Black farmers offering courses on their farms for new Black farmers. Salaries and scholarships provided by the University.

Solution #5

\$500K in funding for Black-led urban farmers. Permanently protect urban farms through conservation easements. Support Black farmers in building an urban-to-rural pipeline for growers.

Solution #6

Ensure Black people are included as navigators in the “Farmland for a New Generation New York” regional navigator program.

Solution #7

Provide full tuition scholarships to all Black students pursuing agricultural degrees in the SUNY system.

Solution #8

Improve data collection so that we know who and where the NYS Black farmers are, and can strengthen networks of mutual support.

Solution #9

Combine and refine these solutions to create a comprehensive plan to increase the number of Black farmers in NYS who are thriving. Take inspiration from Elizabeth Warren’s process of creating a platform to reflect the needs of Black farmers nationwide.

