



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Metzger Bill Providing Relief For Farmers on Labor Costs Advances Out of Committee

JEN METZGER January 28, 2020

| ISSUE: **FARM WORKFORCE RETENTION CREDIT**

| COMMITTEE: **AGRICULTURE**



**Albany, NY...** Today, an important bill by Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) to help New York's family farms remain competitive was advanced out of the committee on Senate Investigations and Government Operations. The bill (S6773) would increase the existing Farm Workforce Retention Credit from \$600 to \$1,200 to farmers for employees who work 500 or more hours each year. Under the current tax law, New York farmers received \$500 per eligible employee in 2019, and would receive \$400 in 2020 and \$600 in 2021, at which point the

existing law would sunset. Metzger's legislation would extend the tax credit indefinitely, increasing the credit to \$800 in 2021 and then to \$1,200 per year thereafter.

In addition to keeping many New York farms out of the red, the bill is intended to enhance New York farmers' ability to attract and maintain skilled workers, instead of losing them to farms in nearby states.

"Many farms are struggling to survive in the face of labor and other costs that are significantly higher in New York than elsewhere in the country and abroad, making it very difficult for them to compete," **said Senator Metzger.** "The proposed tax credit will provide needed relief and level the playing field, supporting our family farms and protecting our long-term food security for the benefit of all New Yorkers."

98 percent of New York's farms are family-owned, and most are small to mid-sized, unlike in other parts of the country. "I'm thrilled to see the bill advance out of the IGO committee, and look forward to a vote by the full Senate in the near future," **said Senator Metzger.**

"I thank Senator Jen Metzger for her continued support of New York agriculture. This tax credit will help New York farms offset some of the increased costs associated with the new farm bill in the 2020 season," **said Mark Rogowski of S&SO Produce in Goshen.**

"This legislation is significant and demonstrates that Senator Metzger understands what farmers need," **said Chris Kelder of Kelder's Farm in Kerhonkson and District 10 Director of the New York Farm Bureau.** "Those of us who work the land know that the margins are thin, and having this kind of support will go a long way to sustain our operations. Furthermore, it offers us additional incentives to hire and keep the farmworkers we need."

“The bill introduced by Senator Metzger to increase and extend the Farm Workforce Retention Credit is a positive measure to address the problem faced by all NYS farmers of how to remain profitable in an increasingly competitive employment environment,” **said Peter Ferrante of Wallkill View Farm in New Paltz.** “Senator Metzger’s action in support of NY agriculture is very much appreciated. Having had the opportunity to spend time visiting with the Senator on our farm last year, I was able to witness firsthand her enthusiastic appreciation of NY agriculture and her strong desire to work in the Senate to keep New York State a great place to farm. The introduction of this bill further exemplifies Senator Metzger’s commitment to that goal.”

According to 2017 USDA-ERS data reported in the Farm Credit East Knowledge Exchange report, New York’s farm labor expense was approximately 13.2 percent of the value of agricultural receipts, compared to the national average of 9.5 percent.

Assembly Agriculture Chair Donna Lupardo (AD-123) carries the legislation in the Assembly.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S6773**

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- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Increases the amount of the farm workforce retention credit

October 11, 2019

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Jen Metzger**

Do you support this bill?