



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Jen Metzger

Metzger Introduces Bill to Connect New Yorkers Seeking Employment to Farms Experiencing Labor Shortages during COVID-19 Pandemic

JEN METZGER March 28, 2020

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, COVID-19, LABOR SHORTAGE**

| COMMITTEE: **AGRICULTURE**



Albany, NY...As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a toll on the economy and jobs, State Senator Jen Metzger (SD-42) has introduced a bill ([S8134](#)) to connect people seeking employment with job opportunities on farms to ensure an adequate workforce for food production. Many thousands of New Yorkers have been laid off as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The bill directs the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to create an online farm employment portal, and work with the Department of Labor and agricultural and other

organizations in publicizing its availability statewide.

"People who have been laid off from their jobs in other sectors, and college students who have returned home earlier than expected, may welcome the opportunity to work on a farm," **said Senator Metzger**. "Agriculture is an essential industry in which labor is in short supply, and this legislation would help make the connections between farmers and workers."

The current shortage of farm labor in New York has been exacerbated by recent disruptions to the federal H-2A agricultural guest worker program as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, which could harm production on farms that are more dependent on agricultural labor.

New York Farm Bureau President David Fisher said, "Farmers are taking extra precautions to educate their employees on safety protocols and to prepare for any workforce issues in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Things are uncertain for everyone right now, in and out of agriculture, and an employment portal proposed by Senator Metzger could be a useful tool to link farms with prospective employees looking for work, especially in times of need. It is essential that our farms continue to operate for the good of us all."

Rondout Valley Growers Association Executive Director Matt Igoe said, "In light of the ongoing coronavirus' impact on the H-2A farmworker visa program, and the devastating number of New Yorkers who have become unemployed because of the virus, The Rondout Valley Growers Association fully supports Senator Metzger's efforts to connect farms with potential farm workers. In these difficult times we all need to expand our thinking and be creative with our solutions."

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S8134

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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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Relates to an online farm portal to advertise farm employment opportunities

March 26, 2020

In Senate Committee [Agriculture](#)

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Do you support this bill?