



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Three Hinchey Bills Pass Senate Legislative Package to Support New York Agriculture

MICHELLE HINCHEY March 5, 2024



ALBANY, NY – A legislative package championed by Senator Michelle Hinchey, the Chair of the Senate Agriculture & Food Committee, is heading to a vote today in the State Senate, including three bills sponsored by Hinchey. The bills aim to extend property tax benefits for beginning farmers, codify Hinchey’s proposal to establish first-ever food procurement goals for state agencies, and create a toll-free hotline connecting farmers with information and resources to support their businesses and boost their bottom lines.

Senator Michelle Hinchey said, “New York agriculture is a foundational aspect of our everyday lives and statewide economy. It’s also an industry that requires our continuous support and protection, and I’m proud to champion this legislative package, put forth by our Senate Majority, that reflects our commitment to meeting the real needs of our farmers. Agriculture is an industry with the most potential to do the most good – fight hunger, affect regional resilience in the face of the Climate Crisis, expand diversity and equity across an entire workforce sector, and galvanize a new generation of farmers to take the helm. Ensuring the success of New York agriculture is my priority, and I thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and my legislative colleagues for their partnership in advancing this package and elevating agriculture as a state priority.”

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, “Farmers have long been the backbone of America, consistently playing a vital role in New York State. I take pride in the work of my conference and their efforts to introduce and pass this legislation, which reaffirms our unwavering commitment to those who cultivate our food. Across every corner of New York State, agriculture significantly impacts our lives and economy, and it’s our duty to continuously safeguard and bolster it. My heartfelt appreciation goes to Senator Michelle Hinchey, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and the bill sponsors for their dedicated work on this crucial legislation.”

Julie Suarez, Associate Dean for Land Grant Affairs for Cornell CALS, said, “Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Senator Hinchey and her colleagues consistently provide an excellent voice in Albany for our family farmers, from those farming in rural landscapes to those farming in our cities. Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences recognizes both the deep responsibility and the incredible privilege of being New York State’s land-grant partner for over 150 years, and our College and extension partners look forward to working

together to meet the goals of these initiatives – supporting beginning farmers, ensuring everyone has access to healthy, local food, and finding opportunities for our family farmers to be both economically and environmentally sustainable.”

Northeast Dairy Producers Association Chair Keith Kimball said, “The Senate’s package of farm bills is an important step forward in supporting New York’s entire agriculture community. By working with our partners at state agencies and Cornell to build upon the science-based management practices already in place, New York’s dairy industry will continue to play a key role in meeting the climate goals of the CLCPA, while feeding families in every corner of the state. NEDPA looks forward to continuing to work with our elected leaders to build on this momentum, support our farmers’ ongoing environmental stewardship efforts, and ensure a viable future for dairy farms in the Empire 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. Recent agriculture census data shows that between 2017 and 2022, NY State lost over 2,700 farms and 360,000 acres of farmland, highlighting the urgent need for this package of legislation to support our state’s farmers, farmland, and food system. We look forward to continuing this critical work with our champions in the legislature.”

The three bills sponsored by Senator Hinchey include:

- **Establishing First-Ever Procurement Goals for State Agencies (S3125):** Requires state agencies to procure 30% of their total food purchases from New York farms by 2028 to enhance support for local farmers and expand access to healthy, local food products within the

state. In August 2023, the goals of Hinchey's legislation were adopted via [Executive Order No. 32](#), and Hinchey is seeking to codify her bill in State Finance Law in perpetuity.

- **Allowing Beginning and Small Farmers to Qualify for Agricultural Assessments (S1056-A):** Broadens the definition of 'land used in agricultural production,' which will allow start-up, beginning, and small farms to qualify for property tax benefits through the Agricultural Assessment.
- **Creating the New York Farming Hotline (S2236):** Establishes a hotline, with assistance from Cornell Cooperative Extension, to connect farmers with information and support, including tax credit programs, beginning farmer loans, grants, research, and marketing assistance.

Other agricultural bills passed by the Senate with Senator Hinchey's support include:

- **Farm Ownership Succession Planning Program (S2407):** Establishes the Farm Ownership Succession Planning Program to help retiring farmers keep their land in farming and help increase the number of minority farm owners in New York State.
- **New York Healthy Incentive Program (S3069):** Establishes a framework to implement a statewide New York Healthy Incentive Program (NYHIP) to incentivize fresh and healthy food purchases using SNAP benefits and increase local investments in farms and farm-to-consumer entities.

- **Carbon Farming Tax Credit For Farmers (S4270):** Develops a tax credit for farmers who maximize carbon sequestration 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.
- **Expansion of Regional Farmers' Markets (S1365):** Directs the Department of Agriculture and Markets to increase the number of regional farmers' markets to help expand access to locally sourced food.
- **Interstate and Intrastate Cider Shipment (S1999):** Creates new direct-to-consumer shipment channels for New York hard cider, granting authorization for both intrastate shipment within New York and interstate shipment to the state. This initiative ensures parity with the wine industry.
- **Agricultural Representation on the State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council (S1218):** Requires there to be representation from the agriculture community on the State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council. The bill authorizes the governor to appoint a representative from the state's biggest agricultural advocacy organization to ensure that the interests of the farming community are considered in fire prevention and building code matters.
- **Creating the Office of Urban Agriculture (S2415):** Establishes an Office of Urban Agriculture to assist with and promote various forms of urban farming throughout New York State.

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