



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Serrano Bill to Develop Agricultural Regional Guides Passes Senate

JOSÉ M. SERRANO September 11, 2009

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Senate Passes Bill to Develop Agricultural Regional Guides

Albany, NY- A bill introduced by Senator José M. Serrano (D-Manhattan/Bronx) to attract New York residents and tourists to the states' farms and farmers markets was passed by the

New York State Senate last night. "Just as farmers cultivate fresh fare for our families, it is our job as legislators to cultivate public awareness of where these healthy foods are available," said Serrano.

The Serrano bill, S.1329, requires the Commissioner of Economic Development, in cooperation with the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets, to promote and distribute statewide and regional guides to farms, farmers markets, and other agriculturally significant tourist destinations. This legislation has already been passed by the Assembly, having been introduced by Assemblywoman Vivian E. Cook (D-Queens), and it is awaiting action by the Governor.

As marketing efforts can often prove difficult for farm families and the non-profit sponsors of farmers markets in the state, this legislation will allow New York State farmers to promote their markets and farms as part of the "I Love New York" tourism campaign.

Serrano, a leading advocate for environmental issues in Albany, serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation. He said the benefits from agricultural tourism and retail food sales not only impact agricultural enterprises, but also the communities in which they exist. These include urban neighborhoods, like Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx, that enjoy successful farmers markets.

"The farmers will benefit, but on a larger scale so will their communities," said Senator Serrano. "In my own district there is a pressing need for healthier food options. This legislation will help increase access to healthy fresh food for all New Yorkers, and will help us to combat serious health problems such as diabetes and obesity."