



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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IDC Unveils Proposal to Expand Pride of NY Program; Expand Access to NY-Grown Products

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The Independent Democratic Conference today proposed an expansion of the Pride of New York Program that will increase awareness of restaurants and markets that sell New York-grown products and help strengthen this state's agricultural economy.

The proposal will create two new designations, “Dine: Pride of New York” for restaurants and “Shop: Pride of New York” for retailers and wholesalers, that would serve as a beacon for New Yorkers who are increasingly looking to buy locally grown products.

“Our goal is to make these symbols the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for New Yorkers who want to buy local and eat local,” said Senator David J. Valesky, (D-Oneida). “By expanding the Pride of New York program, we will help keep New York money in New York, and strengthen our overall economy.”

New York’s agricultural industry, driven partially by the nationwide local food movement, has more than doubled during a decade-long period, accounting for \$31.2 billion in farming and related agricultural activity in 2007. Increasing demand for locally grown and processed foods has driven this growth.

The IDC found that in order to meet demand, farmers heavily rely upon direct sales to consumers. In fact, more than 7,000 New York state farmers currently sell directly to consumers, but only 1,782 of them sell to restaurant and retail wholesalers. To address this issue, the IDC's "Dine" and "Shop" program will expand growth by opening up the more traditional -- and higher capacity -- supply chain between farmers, wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants. By identifying like minded wholesalers, retailers, and restaurants, New York's agricultural industry will be better equipped to meet a rising demand for local food.

A recent survey of New York State residents found that 41 percent of respondents would buy local products if they were readily available at their local store, or supermarket. Additionally a 2011 report from the New York City Council identified some \$700 million in unmet demand for New York-grown products in New York City.

“Given the choice and the availability, New Yorkers want New York-grown products,” said Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, (D-Bronx/Westchester). “With the Shop: Pride of New York and the Grow: Pride of New York programs, we are seeking to shine a spotlight on the businesses who sell local. By doing so, we will both increase sales and give an added incentive to other restaurants and markets to grow their selection of New York grown products.”

Under the IDC’s proposal (S.6965/ Valesky -- Dine: Pride of New York, and S.6964/ Carlucci -- Shop: Pride of NY):

-- Food sellers, such as grocery stores, supermarkets, and corner stores, must carry at least 20 items grown and/or processed in New York State in order to qualify for a *Shop: Pride of New York* designation. Eligibility for wholesalers would be determined by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets.

-- Restaurants must demonstrate that 15% of their total ingredients are grown and/or processed in New York State in order to qualify for a *Dine: Pride of New York* designation.

These programs are an expansion of the Pride of New York Program, which was established in 1996, but was chiefly aimed at promoting New York State grown products themselves.

“This innovative proposal will harness the purchasing power of New Yorkers,” said Senator David Carlucci, (D-Rockland/ Orange). “When consumers spend their money on local New York products, we can ensure that that money will be reinvested into the Main Street economy that help our small businesses thrive.”

Qualifying businesses will be allowed to use one of the attached logos, (or a similar one designed by the state Agriculture and Markets) to hang in their front windows, and to use for advertising and promotional materials. The businesses would also be listed on a subdirectory of the Agriculture and Markets Web site.

The program, which will be free of charge to participating businesses, are based on similar successful efforts in New Jersey, Colorado, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and South Carolina.

“The demand for local food is there, we just have to show people where to go,” said Senator Diane Savino, (D-Staten Island/ Brooklyn). “Our program will help an ear of corn grown in Brookfield end up on a supper table in Brooklyn. Everyone wins.”

Max Crisp, owner of American Burrito, a Rockland County based restaurant chain to buys local products, said: “Shop and Dine: Pride of New York will make a significant impact on our local economy and may even create greater incentive to cultivate misappropriated land in many communities as well. The true hidden benefit, however, lies in bringing quality food back to our tables. There is nothing like biting into an \$8 burrito filled with locally grown Roma tomatoes, cilantro, onions and freshly picked lettuce.”

Peter X. Kelly of the Xaviars Restaurant Group, said: " As a Chef and Restaurant owner operating in New York State's Hudson Valley for nearly 30 years I applaud this potential legislation. This bill will celebrate the farmers and vendors here in New York State that have made our area a dining destination and will motivate operators to utilize the products that our grown and manufactured right here in our collective backyards."

Julie Suarez, New York State Farm Bureau Director of Public Policy, said: "New York's farm families are always seeking new ways to help actively promote New York farm products, both in the grocery store, at farm stands and farmers' markets, and in local restaurants and specialty stores. While several grocers and restaurants are already members of the existing Pride of New York program, the concept of expanding this out further to truly help capitalize on the buy local movement is welcomed by our farmer members."

Tom Urtz, vice president of human resources and community affairs, ShopRite Supermarkets, Inc., said: "ShopRite Supermarkets is proud to partner with Senator Klein in support of this very important Shop Pride of New York legislation. In commitment to supporting the communities we serve, ShopRite has been working with farmers to provide our customers with the very best local produce and products available. ShopRite will proudly display the Shop Pride of New York logo in our stores to continue to help drive consumer awareness and encourage community support."

Dennis Martin, Hannaford District Manager, said: "Hannaford congratulates the Independent Democratic Conference, and the Food Industry Alliance of New York in recognizing the importance of buying local products and establishing a program that encourages both shoppers and stores to support our local food providers. Hannaford Supermarkets has a

long-standing commitment to foods grown and produced locally in all our markets. We are proud to provide our customers with the freshest and best-tasting products produced right here in New York State while simultaneously supporting the state's economic development."

Chris Fowler, Executive Director of SyracuseFirst, said: We'd like to applaud Senators Valesky, Carlucci and their colleagues in the Independent Democratic Conference, for their leadership in support of the 'buy local' movement. Studies have shown that by shifting spending from chains to locally owned independent farms and businesses, individual citizens almost double their impact on the regional economy. These bills take another step in allowing citizens to make more informed decisions about products grown or produced in New York State. There are a growing number of people that 'buy local' and many more eager to participate, these pieces of legislation will connect the dots for businesses and citizens alike. At a time when there is confusion over what "local" means, Senators Valesky and Carlucci are painting a clear picture using an established brand in 'Pride of New York.' We expect these efforts to have a positive impact on the regional economy and encourage a climate for sourcing local products."