

## 2015-K1140

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2016 as Agriculture Mediation Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, The agricultural industry is part of the foundation upon which our distinct American heritage is built; and

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize official months that are set aside to increase awareness of serious agricultural issues that affect the lives of citizens of New York State; and

WHEREAS, Agricultural mediation is a tool used for farmers, agribusiness, and others in the agricultural community to discuss difficult subjects and to reach fair and workable solutions without involving outside authorities; it is both confidential and convenient; and

WHEREAS, These free or low cost services are available in every county in New York State; in comparison to traditional debt collection, mediation preserves a positive business relationship and reduces collection costs; in addition, mediating cases allows everyone to get back to the work they want to be doing, while preserving reputations in interconnected agricultural communities; and

WHEREAS, The New York State Agricultural Mediation Program (NYSAMP) is one of more than 30 state programs which provide conflict management services; this vital program is funded by the USDA and New York State Unified Court System; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, NYSAMP is administered by the New York State Dispute Resolution Association, an independent nonprofit organization; and

WHEREAS, During 2014, NYSAMP handled more than 400 cases involving agricultural producers across New York State; of the 928 people served, collectively there was a 93 percent agreement rate; each case involves

conflict, and managing conflict productively is what mediators do; and WHEREAS, Agricultural Mediation has been instrumental in helping to improve communication and in encouraging participants to craft solutions that work best for them, removing many barriers that prevent farm businesses from thriving; and

WHEREAS, NYSAMP mediations also save time; although complex cases may require multiple sessions, the vast majority are addressed and resolved fairly quickly; more than 80 percent of agricultural mediations result in agreements; and

WHEREAS, Agricultural Mediation addresses such problems as small claims and unpaid bills, machinery and supplier credit, Right to Farm issues, farm succession, USDA appeals, and Farm Family and Neighbor disputes; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is now moved to commemorate Agriculture Mediation Month and to acknowledge the efforts of citizens which provide these vital conflict management services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 2016 as Agriculture Mediation Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.