



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senator Terrence Murphy's Legislation helps Small Farms in Big Cities

TERRENCE MURPHY August 4, 2017

| ISSUE: **FAMILY FARMS, FAMILY, SMALL BUSINESS**



Albany, NY - According to the United States Department of Agriculture, more than 90 percent of farms in the United States are classified as small, with a gross cash farm income of \$250,000, or less. These farms, most of which are family-owned and operated, face considerable operating and economic challenges. They are vital to our economy and well-being as a nation, serving to protect and enhance natural resources and foster the development of new enterprises. To encourage their growth, Senator Terrence Murphy has

sponsored S6313, legislation that calls for a decrease in the agricultural assessment gross sales value threshold for properties under seven acres - the first such change in more than 40 years. The reduction will help conserve agriculture statewide and encourage the proliferation of more urban and small farm operations down state.

"The income threshold for New York State's farmland assessment law is outdated and has been in need of change for a long time," said Senator Murphy "The benefits of lowering the threshold are immeasurable. Protecting the land for agricultural use helps clean stormwater and reduce runoff. Through proper care and attention, the land can become a sustainable food source for schools, restaurants, grocery stores and households and can be the impetus for an economic boon in the Hudson Valley."

Peekskill Mayor Frank Catalina said, "You may not think of farms when you mention the City of Peekskill, but we depend on the success of small farms. We have a popular Farmer's Market that attracts shoppers from throughout the Hudson Valley and beyond that contributes to the City's economy. We must continue to do all we can help small farm operators thrive because they are integral to our own success."

"This bill can aid industries that play an essential role in Westchester County," said John Ravitz, Executive Vice President for the Westchester Business Council. "We appreciate Senator Murphy's efforts to help small farms. This bill will give farms more resources to create new jobs that can spark an economic boost for the County."

Established in 1971, the agricultural districts law allowed farmers to enjoy certain benefits, such as the agricultural assessment of real property. The current \$50,000 threshold does not reflect the ability of new farms to operate and flourish. The exorbitant \$50,000 threshold discouraged new business and economic growth, making it difficult for small operations

such as farms, organic orchards, flower growers and meal delivery services to get a foothold. Thanks to the internet, the success rate of these industries is on the rise. Lowering the start-up threshold would increase profits and create new jobs.

The legislation passed the Senate unanimously this year and is sponsored by fellow Westchester legislator Gary Pretlow in the Assembly.