



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Senator Helming Hosts New York Farmland Protection Forum in Canandaigua

JONATHAN MONFILETTO - 315-568-9816 November 29, 2017



CANANDAIGUA – Senator Pam Helming held a New York Farmland Protection Forum at the Wood Library in Canandaigua on Thursday, Nov. 16. Senator Helming partnered with American Farmland Trust, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources – of which Senator Helming is the Senate Chair – to bring this opportunity to our region. The event brought together approximately 40 representatives of county, town, and village governments throughout the Finger Lakes and Central New York, area Cornell Cooperative Extensions, local farms, and other local

organizations to discuss methods of preserving agricultural land.

“In the Finger Lakes region, we rely on our farmland to put healthy, nutritious food on our tables. Our farmland is also critical to our regional economy because farms and agribusinesses are a top job creator. With our diversity of locally grown farm products, leading agricultural research at Cornell University, and abundant fresh and clean water, New York State really is at the forefront of farming excellence. It is critical that we continue to discuss the different development pressures on our farmland and how our local communities can plan for and promote farmland preservation. I was honored to host this important discussion for our local leaders, and I thank the American Farmland Trust and the Department of Agriculture and Markets for their informative and engaging presentations,” Senator Helming said.

In a presentation titled “Cultivating Community Leadership for NY Farms,” AFT New York Director David Haight and Policy Manager Samantha Levy emphasized that local governments are best equipped to oversee farmland protection and can do so by planning for agriculture in their communities. Mr. Haight pointed out that farms bolster food security, which leads to national security, a healthy environment, and contributions to local property tax bases. Ms. Levy shared the results of a recent survey, which indicated that the majority of local leaders polled do consider agriculture a priority for their communities. In the survey and at the forum, participants also discussed what their local governments have done to protect farmland and what they see as the most significant threats to agriculture in their areas.

In a presentation titled “Is Your Town Planning for Agriculture,” NYSDAM Grant Manager John Brennan described the tools – such as comprehensive plans and zoning plans – that communities can use to support agricultural districts within their borders. Agriculture Protection Specialist Jeff Kehoe discussed the process and preparation behind farmland

protection grants that are administered by the Department. The forum concluded with Mr. Haight posing a series of discussion questions to the audience of local leaders and also taking questions from the audience.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

###