



New York Farm Bureau  
Renée St. Jacques, Assistant Director  
P.518.436.5616  
rstjacques@nyfb.org

## MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

**Assembly Bill 5060 (Assemblyman Magee) / Senate Bill 4900 (Senator Ritchie)**

### **AN ACT TO AMEND THE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW AND THE PUBLIC LANDS LAW, IN RELATION TO ACCESS TO VIABLE AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

**Date: 5/15/2017**

---

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, would like to express its support for this legislation. If enacted, this bill would enhance access to viable agricultural land for new and beginning farmers and develop an inventory of state-owned real property that would be useable for farming.

The agriculture industry has a substantial impact on New York's overall economic health, contributing approximately \$8 billion in overall return to the state's economy. Currently, the average age for New York farmers is 56 which is expected to increase unless steps are taken to encourage beginning farmers to join the agriculture industry. This bill would assist in identifying properties owned by the state that are viable for farming and could be sold or leased for farming. Also, it will promote information for purchasing or leasing those properties. Farming is a difficult business and there are many barriers to new farmers. By allowing for beginning farmers to have access to viable agricultural land, they will be able to start and grow their new businesses.

The bill would also emphasize assistance for new and beginning farmers in existing state law. It would require the New York State Agriculture Advisory Council to provide advice regarding tax, financial assistance, and other policies that could address the needs of beginning farmers. This assistance for new and beginning farmers is essential for helping them receive necessary information that is vital as they enter the agriculture industry.

For these reasons, New York Farm Bureau requests your support of this legislation.