



NEWS FROM NEW YORK FARM BUREAU

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AGRICULTURAL GROUPS ASK GOVERNOR CUOMO TO DEFEND FARMS IN LAWSUIT

Led by New York Farm Bureau, a broad group of 18 farm organizations, institutions and cooperatives have joined together to express their disappointment in Governor Cuomo. They are greatly concerned about his decision to abandon farm families across the state by not defending the state's labor laws against the NYCLU constitutional lawsuit that is pushing for collective bargaining rights for farmworkers. The agricultural coalition sent him a letter today addressing their concerns and are strongly urging Governor Cuomo to reconsider his position.

The letter recognizes the partnerships with the Governor's administration over the past six years to promote economic development in agriculture. However, his public statements regarding the lawsuit and state labor law raise significant issues about his lack of defense of farms in this state. The letter, excerpted below, reflects the misguided credence his support gives to the insulting and disparaging remarks made in the lawsuit.

"This is unfortunate because you have seen first-hand farm owners working alongside their employees. You are also aware of the added benefits that farmworkers enjoy, which can include complimentary housing and utilities, skills training, participating in retirement plans, and even earning equity in the farm business. In fact, your own Departments of Labor, Health, and Agriculture and Markets are involved in overseeing and inspecting farm operations to ensure that the multitude of state and federal labor laws that specifically protect farmworkers are met."

In addition, the letter goes on to highlight the myriad of challenges that family farms are facing in New York and the notable repercussions that will likely follow if the governor does not defend the law.

"Combined with already higher taxes, a stifling regulatory environment, and a minimum wage increase this year, collective bargaining would make the continued operation of many family farms untenable. Farmers, who we have always contended are tied to the land, are now seriously investigating moving their businesses out of state and closing their doors. Your actions this year have left them feeling abandoned by the state they call home. And your actions jeopardize the success of your own "Taste NY" and "New York Certified" programs."

To read the full letter along with the list of organizations, please follow link:

<http://nyfb.org/img/uploads/file/LawsuitLettertoCuomo6-06-16.pdf>