



NEWS FROM NEW YORK FARM BUREAU

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For Immediate Release:

June 20, 2016

NEW YORK FARM BUREAU SEEKS TO DEFEND FARMS AGAINST LAWSUIT BY LABOR ACTIVISTS

New York Farm Bureau seeks to intervene in the farm labor lawsuit filed against the State of New York and Governor Cuomo. The grassroots farm organization will file a motion today in State Supreme Court of Albany County to gain intervenor status in a lawsuit filed by the New York Civil Liberties Union Foundation. The NYCLUF seeks to create a constitutional right for farmworkers to collectively bargain. The ultimate goal of NYFB with today's motion is for the court to dismiss the lawsuit.

NYFB is taking this major step to defend farmers, who feel they have been abandoned by the Governor and the New York Attorney General. Both leaders have made public statements supporting the lawsuit and refusing to defend state law, despite its importance to agriculture in New York State. NYFB believes it has the right to intervene because the interest of its members will not be represented by the defendants – the Governor and Attorney General - and the ability of the organization's members to continue to produce food for New York residents would be harmed in the event the plaintiffs prevail in this action.

The motion reads, "Farm Bureau is uniquely situated to represent the varied perspectives of its member farms and to zealously defend the constitutionality of the challenged farm labor exemption."

Farm Bureau believes that the exemption of farmworkers from collective bargaining rights is constitutional, and that the exclusion of farmworkers from the State Labor Relations Act law is based on decades of rational public policy and legal precedent that will be outlined in NYFB's motions to intervene and to dismiss.

New York Farm Bureau believes that the legal precedent is clear. This is not a question for the courts, and the NYCLUF is attempting to make an end-run around the legislature, which has not approved collective bargaining for farmworkers despite numerous opportunities.

"New York Farm Bureau has a century long record of defending the state's family farms, and today's action is one of the most important in our long history. If we can't count on our state leaders to do the right thing in this case, we are prepared to stand up for our members in court to protect their rights," said Dean Norton, New York Farm Bureau President.