



New York Farm Bureau

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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 1837 (Senator Hinchey)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE PUBLIC SERVICE LAW, IN RELATION TO REQUIRING A STUDY ON THE HEIGHT OF OVERHEAD UTILITY LINES AND COMMUNICATION LINES AS SUCH RELATE TO THE HEIGHT OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT AND OTHER HEAVY-DUTY EQUIPMENT; AND PROVIDING FOR THE REPEAL OF SUCH PROVISIONS UPON EXPIRATION THEREOF

Date: 1/27/2025

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, respectfully requests your support for this legislation. If enacted, this legislation would require that the Public Service Commission perform a study on the height of overhead utility and communications lines in relation to necessary agricultural equipment.

Currently, the National Electric Safety Code's minimum height requirements for communications lines (cable tv, phone, fiber, etc.) is 15 and a half feet. Given the size and height of modern farm equipment, this minimum height is simply not compatible. As a result, there continue to be many instances, where farmers cannot access or work in their fields without hitting utility lines. For example, just recently:

- In Washington County, a mower contacted utility wires and took down several poles
- In Onondaga County, a farmer had a mower wing pull down a utility line
- In Clinton County, a farm has had discs and mowers take down cable and internet lines.
- In Jefferson County, silage trucks continually were contacted by low utility lines in fields
- In Ontario County, one farm has had at least one incident a year for the last five years with low utility lines, including electric lines

Clearly, given potential threats to community and farm safety, the Public Service Commission should study the impacts of current utility height standards and whether the standards must be increased in height to reflect the size of modern farm equipment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.