



New York Farm Bureau
Kat Slye-Hernandez, PhD
Senior Associate Director of Public Policy
P.518.588.6338
kslye-hernandez@nyfb.org

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 8761 (Senator Skoufis) / Assembly Bill 9726 (Assemblymember Lupardo)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE VEHICLE AND TRAFFIC LAW, IN RELATION TO EXEMPTING FARMERS FROM COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE REQUIREMENTS WHILE OPERATING A COVERED FARM VEHICLE.

Date: 4/4/2024

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization, would like to express its support for this legislation. This bill would grant farmers and farm employees an exemption from having a commercial driver's license (CDL) while operating a covered farm vehicle within 150 miles of their farm.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has regulations allowing states to adopt CDL exemptions (waivers) for a long list of occupations, farming being one. This bill would bring New York state law in line with the 42 other states that have adopted this exemption, including our neighbors Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Vermont.

Farm hauling is a very seasonal endeavor, requiring drivers to be ready and able to transport equipment to field and produce to processing/market before they spoil. With the current driver shortage in the trucking industry, requiring farms to hire CDL drivers to transport their goods within NY is taking away from drivers who could be transporting goods to more people over longer distances.

Most farms in New York are small, family-owned farms, and the additional licenses and CDL training are very expensive, making it more costly to transport food in the state. Additionally, if a farmer has a CDL driver employee, and that person is out sick, they are unable to transport needed farm equipment to the field during harvest, possibly leading to loss of crops.

Adopting this exemption for farmers would reduce costs for small family farms, help keep local food affordable, and avoid loss of planting and harvest time. For the above reasons, New York Farm Bureau requests your support of this legislation.