



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road • Suite 300 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

October 13, 2020

New York State Thruway Authority  
c/o Legal Department  
200 Southern Blvd.  
P.O. Box 189  
Albany, NY 12201-0189

**RE: Proposed Toll Adjustment**

To Whom it May Concern,

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the New York State Thruway Authority's Proposed Toll Adjustment. NYFB has several concerns regarding the proposed adjustment to tolls and the impact that it will have on farmers that use the Thruway system to transport goods across the state.

Many New York farms utilize the NYS Thruway to transport farm products across the state. While it is important to increase the safety and reliability of the state's transportation infrastructure, it is also imperative that New York farmers can affordably transport New York food, especially during a crisis. The current pandemic has further shown the important role of New York farms in combatting food insecurity, especially in urban areas, such as New York City.

The increase of tolls on the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge will affect those farmers who transport farm products to New York City. The pandemic has tested the resilience of the state's food supply chain and although many farms struggled economically due to COVID-19, farmers continued to provide food to the communities in the New York City area during the pandemic. Increasing these tolls will only create more unreasonable barriers for New York agriculture and financially impact a farmer's ability to transport essential food to the people that need it the most.

Instead of increasing tolls and creating more barriers for farmers, we encourage New York State to establish a farm-specific EZ-Pass category to allow agricultural vehicles transporting farm products to obtain a reduced toll-rate on the New York State Thruway and the bridges and tunnels in metropolitan New York. In fact, Governor Cuomo has previously voiced support for such proposals to support New York agriculture.

In Governor Cuomo's 2016 state budget proposal, as part of the State of the State, he included a Thruway toll proposal which consisted of a plan to eliminate tolls for farmers using EZ-Pass to

bring farm goods to market through a 100 percent credit. Reducing or eliminating tolls would provide important support to farmers as they continue to work through this pandemic and provide essential food to New York communities.

For these reasons, NYFB urges you to take into consideration the negative impact these proposed increased tolls could have on New York farmers and food insecure residents of the state and consider establishing a farm-specific EZ-Pass or tax credit for farmers to help defray costs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Fisher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Fisher  
President