



New York Farm Bureau
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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 4021 (Senator Ritchie)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW, IN RELATION TO ESTABLISHING A YOUNGER FARMER AGRICULTURE ADVISORY BOARD

Date: 2/3/2017

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization would like to express its support for this legislation. If enacted, this bill would establish a young farmer advisory board within the agriculture and markets law.

Currently, the average age for New York farmers is 59 and is expected to increase unless steps are taken to encourage beginning farmers to join the agriculture industry. This bill would create a young farmer agriculture advisory board, housed at the Department of Agriculture and Markets, to advise and recommend policies and programs affecting agriculture. Farming is a difficult business and there are many barriers to new farmers who might otherwise consider entering the profession and a young farmer agriculture advisory board would allow young farmers to openly discuss how to break down those barriers.

The agriculture industry has a substantial impact on New York's overall economic health, contributing approximately \$8 billion in overall return to the state's economy. By allowing young farmers to have a forum to discuss possible policies as well as issues to overcome, will enable their business to have a strong foundation for the future. The recent increase in demand for locally grown foods and beverages further highlights the need to assist new farmers entering the profession.

For these reasons, New York Farm Bureau requests your support of this legislation.