



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road P.O. Box 5330 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

May 24, 2010

The Honorable David A. Paterson, Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

RE: NYFB Opposition to EPF Program Bill

Dear Governor Paterson,

On behalf of the member families of New York Farm Bureau (NYFB), the state's largest general farm organization, I am writing to express my disappointment and our opposition to the program bill introduced today regarding the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). This legislation would reduce funding to existing EPF categories in order to pay for operation and maintenance of parks and historic sites across the state. While we believe keeping parks open is important, cutting support for on-farm environmental initiatives or reducing other EPF categories is not the appropriate manner to address this issue.

As you are keenly aware, the EPF was established to serve as a dedicated fund to ensure continual progress on protecting New York's natural resources. This fund is unique in that it is intended to ensure that protection efforts continue regardless of economic conditions. It is because of this dedicated principle that we oppose the proposal put forth today. Funding cuts to existing categories in the EPF and off-setting state park operation and maintenance costs with EPF funds reduces the ability of the EPF to provide continual environmental progress and is unacceptable. I strongly urge you to reconsider today's proposal and move forward with at least maintaining the EPF numbers proposed in your January Executive Budget Proposal.

From an agricultural perspective, helping farm families meet the most stringent water quality standards in the nation, aiding them in addressing new, costly and burdensome Department of Environmental Conservation open burning mandates, protecting farmland from constant development pressure and supporting efforts to contain invasive species are all essential categories of the EPF. Unfortunately, your proposal cuts water quality funding for farms and reduces the amount of funding available to protect farmland over the long-term.

While we recognize that the current economic crisis forces a new approach to public spending, cutting funds that provide advancement and investment in our natural resources and which support development of a green-based economy is counterproductive to New York's fiscal health. For these reasons, NYFB opposes the program bill introduced today.

As always, we appreciate your consideration of our concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean E. Norton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dean E. Norton
President

cc: Members of the New York State Legislature