



New York Farm Bureau

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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 2594 (Senator Marcellino)/Assembly bill 5180 (Assemblywoman Fahy)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW, IN RELATION TO THE TRANSFERS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND TO THE GENERAL FUND.

Date: 2/10/2017

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization, respectfully urges you to support the above referenced legislation. If enacted, this bill would refocus state efforts on various environmental improvement projects by requiring the Division of Budget to create a five-year plan to return borrowed funds to the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The bill would also establish in statute various environmental programs currently receiving EPF funds.

The EPF is designed to be a dedicated fund to improve the environment. Unfortunately, over the past decade, some of these specifically allocated funds have been borrowed to cover state spending in other areas. Our concern however is that this borrowing can be used as a short term cash-flow management tool or as an intermediate term financing mechanism. Should this borrowing continue, we fear that environmental programs may suffer as a result of this practice.

This proposed legislation will also establish annual EPF funding targeting repayment of funds to the EPF. Given the critical funding needs for agricultural programs in the EPF, such as Farmland Protection and water quality programs, this added funding is sorely needed and would be well-utilized by the farm industry.

This bill is a proactive step towards protecting the main source of environmental program funding. For that reason, we respectfully request your support for this legislation.