



New York Farm Bureau
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MEMORANDUM OF OPPOSITION

Senate Bill 8170 (Senator Hannon) / Assembly Bill 10276 (Assemblyman Englebright)

AN ACT TO AMEND THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW, IN RELATION TO THE SALE OR USE OF NITROGEN FERTILIZER

Date: 4/17/2018

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, respectfully opposes this legislation. The policy changes presented in this bill raise several concerns for the farm community, which are enumerated below.

While this legislation does not include the farm use of nitrogen, this legislation troubles New York's family farms as the policy underpinnings are not based on sound science and do not recognize the significant efforts taken on Long Island to reduce the residential use of nitrogen.

New York Farm Bureau has been involved in finding the solution to harmful algae blooms across the state and recognize the impact they have on communities. However, this legislation should be better directed at establishing and promoting best practices for fertilizer use, empowering Cornell Cooperative Extension and other agencies to undertake more demanding educational efforts for homeowners and more emphatically addressing another major contributor to harmful algae blooms – unregulated homeowner septic discharges into fresh and saltwater bodies.

In addition, the legislation, as crafted, does nothing to prevent over application of nitrogen on residential lawns. Like on farms, lawn application must be done at the right rate at the right time, while also taking into account other external factors, such as weather. Merely reducing the amount of nitrogen in fertilizer sold and used on long island actually creates another policy issue, as applicators will simply apply twice as much of the low nitrogen fertilizer to reach the scientifically approved application rate.

While, again, this bill does not impact Long Island's farmers directly, the agricultural industry closely monitors potential policy threats to our industry. Given the lack of sound science surrounding this legislation with regard to the use of a critical agricultural input, New York Farm Bureau respectfully requests your opposition to this legislation.