



New York Farm Bureau
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MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 5716 (Senator Metzger)

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ACT, IN
REALTION TO THE BEGINNING FARMERS NY FUND**

Date: 5/20/2019

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, respectfully requests your support for this legislation. This bill would amend the New York State New Farmers Grant Fund program to give more beginning farmers the opportunity to apply for a grant.

Since 2014, the program has provided over \$3.27 million to support beginning farmers who have chosen farming as a career and who materially and substantially participate in the production of an agricultural product on their farm. Farming is a difficult business and there are many barriers to new farmers including finding affordable farmland. Since many beginning farmers will lease the land for their farms, this legislation would allow the grant to be used for capital projects on leased land. Also, this bill would create additional award tiers for projects under \$15,000 and the criteria for receiving a grant will consider farm investments when the applicants have less than \$10,000 in annual farm income which will allow for more beginning farmers to be eligible.

The recent increase in demand for locally grown foods and beverages further highlights the need to assist new farmers entering the profession. It is important that the state paves the way for new and beginning farmers to succeed in their farm business and support New York agriculture.

For these reasons, New York Farm Bureau requests your support of this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.