



February 24, 2023

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore and Majority Leader
NYS Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Gustavo Rivera
Chair, Committee on Health
NYS Senate
Capitol Building, Room 502C
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Amy Paulin
Chair, Committee on Health
NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 822
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Michelle Hinchey
Chair, Committee on Agriculture
NYS Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 902
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Donna A. Lupardo
Chair, Committee on Agriculture
NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 828
Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Jessica Ramos
Chair, Committee on Labor
NYS Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 946
Albany, NY 12247

The Honorable Latoya Joyner
Chair, Committee on Labor
NYS Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 522
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, Chair Hinchey, Chair Ramos, Chair Rivera, Chair Joyner, Chair Lupardo, Chair Paulin:

We write in strong support of the New York State Occupational Health Clinic Network (OHCN) and the need to increase its annual funding from \$9.56 million to \$20 million in the Local Assistance - Department of Health Appropriations in the FY 2023-2024 State Budget.

As you know, the OHCN, through its nine member centers, serves as an essential resource for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of occupational disease and other work-related injuries and illnesses. As a result of more than a decade of flat funding from New York State, however, the OHCN and its member centers are now woefully underfunded, forcing the OHCN member centers to consider implementing future cuts to some of their vital programs and services. An annual state funding increase of approximately \$10 million is necessary to prevent those future cuts.

Tens of thousands of agricultural and forestry workers across the state benefit directly from the OHCN funding and the agricultural-centric programs and services of the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) -- one of the nine centers which is supported by OHCN funding. NYCAMH is slightly different than the other OHCN centers in that it serves agricultural and forestry workplaces and workers exclusively, and, unlike the other centers which serve particular geographic regions of the state, NYCAMH serves this specific groups of workers throughout the entire state.

Yet, NYCAMH's ability to serve agricultural and forestry workplaces and workers has been greatly jeopardized due to inadequate and continuously flat state funding. In fact, NYCAMH requires this year a \$1 million increase in its annual state funding just to meet the current needs of New York State's agricultural and forestry industries. Such a funding increase would be possible only if OHCN's annual state funding is increased by approximately \$10 million.

We are deeply grateful for the leadership of Chairs Joyner, Lupardo, Paulin, Hinchey, Ramos, and Rivera on this important issue. We respectfully urge continued support for an increase in OHCN's annual state funding from \$9.56 million to \$20 million in the FY 2023-2024 State Budget.

Sincerely,

John Bartow

John Bartow
Empire State Forest
Products Association

Ben Gonzalez

Ben Gonzalez
Long Island Oyster
Growers Association

Amanda Dackowsky

Amanda Dackowsky
New York Beef Producers

Liz Malchoff

Liz Malchoff
NY Berry Growers Association

Lauren Williams

Lauren Williams
New York Farm Bureau

Brett Kast

Brett Kast
NY State Horticultural Society

Keith Kimball

Keith Kimball
Northeast Dairy Producers

NOFA-NY

Northeast Organic
Farming Association
of New York