



**New York Farm Bureau**  
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# **MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT**

**Senate Bill 7841 (Senator Ritchie)**

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS LAW AND THE PUBLIC LANDS LAW, IN RELATION TO ACCESS TO VIABLE AGRICULTURE LAND FOR NEW AND BEGINNING FARMERS**

**Date: 4/30/2018**

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New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, would like to express its support for this legislation. If enacted, this bill will provide better access to agriculture land for new and beginning farmers through the leasing of state owned land and develop an inventory of state owned property that is suitable for farming.

The agriculture industry has a substantial impact on New York's overall economic health, contributing approximately \$8 billion in overall return to the state's economy. Currently, the average age for New York farmers is 56. This bill would assist in identifying properties owned by the state that are viable for farming and could be sold or leased to farmers. There are many barriers to entry in to agriculture for beginning farmers and access to land is one of the largest, particularly in some high land value areas of the state. Allowing beginning farmers to have access to viable state owned agricultural land may help a beginning farmer who otherwise would not be able to purchase or lease land.

The bill would also emphasize assistance for new and beginning farmers in existing state law. It would require the New York State Agriculture Advisory Council to provide advice regarding tax, financial assistance, and other policies that could address the needs of beginning farmers. This assistance for new and beginning farmers is essential for helping them receive necessary information that is vital as they enter the agriculture industry.

For these reasons, New York Farm Bureau respectfully requests you support of this legislation.