



New York Farm Bureau
Renée St. Jacques, Assistant Director
P.518.436.8495
rstjacques@nyfb.org

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Senate Bill 695 (Senator Ortt) / Assembly Bill 7166 (Assemblymember Norris)

**AN ACT TO AMEND THE CANAL LAW, IN RELATION TO MAINTAINING BRIDGES
IN A MANNER TO NOT IMPEDE COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES**

Date: 5/14/2018

New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest agricultural advocacy organization, would like to express its support for this legislation. This bill would require New York State to maintain canal lift bridges so as to not impede commercial vehicle traffic. It would also require a public hearing in the community where the bridge is located.

Canal lift bridges provide a critical transportation mechanism for both residential and business traffic, including agriculture. Currently, the State allows these canal lift bridges to deteriorate to such a point that they must be closed since it is the State's discretion to maintain and operate the bridges. This has affected residents and businesses by requiring longer commutes and an increase in business costs. This legislation would require canal lift bridges to be maintained if the bridge is being utilized for commerce, transportation of students, or agriculture.

Closed canal bridges have restricted farmers from accessing their own fields, have added additional miles onto trips to fields, and diverts the delivery of agricultural products from the most direct route possible. When transporting fresh fruits, vegetables, milk, and other farm products, farmers need to be able to utilize public routes without adding additional miles to the trip.

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