

NYC Chocolate Milk Ban

On September 16th, Assemblywoman Lupardo, Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, and Senator Jen Metzger, Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, sent the following letter to NYC Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza regarding the City's proposal to eliminate chocolate milk from school menus.



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DONNA A. LUPARDO

123rd Assembly District

SENATOR JEN METZGER

42nd Senate District

September 16, 2019

Chancellor Richard Carranza
New York City Schools
NYC Department of Education
Tweed Courthouse, 52 Chambers Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Chancellor Carranza:

We are writing in regards to the proposal to ban chocolate milk in NYC Public Schools. As Chairs of the Committees on Agriculture for the NYS Assembly and NYS Senate, we are concerned about the impact this potential change could have on our state's dairy industry, as well as the negative health impacts it could have for NYC's children.

Agriculture is a major part of New York's economy, generating \$5.7 billion in 2017, according to a recent report issued by Comptroller Tom DiNapoli. A major contributor to this economic activity, which increased by \$900 million over the previous year, is our state's dairy industry, the fourth largest in the nation. However, despite this success, farmers and producers continue to face a number of challenges, such as the current low price they receive for their milk.

One of the ways the Governor and our colleagues in the Legislature have supported our agricultural economy is through the popular Farm to School program, connecting New York producers with schools across the state. The proposal to eliminate the option of

chocolate milk in your schools would be a step backward in the progress we've seen through this program and would constitute a serious setback for our already-struggling dairy farmers.

We are equally concerned about what the ban on chocolate milk in schools could mean for students. If in the process students opt to drink no milk, they would be deprived of essential vitamins and other nutrients essential to growth and improved academic performance. In recent years, dairy companies have made an effort to reduce the amount of sugar in chocolate milk while still maintaining the important health benefits milk offers.

On behalf of our many dairy farmers, we respectfully ask that this proposal be reconsidered. This would assist in our ongoing Farm to School initiatives, while providing a nutritious option for students who might choose to avoid milk altogether.

Sincerely,



Donna A. Lupardo, Chair
Assembly Committee on Agriculture



Jen Metzger, Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture

Cc:

Hon. Carl E. Heastie, Speaker of Assembly

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senate Majority Leader

Richard A. Ball, Commissioner of Agriculture & Markets