



WILL BARCLAY  
Minority Leader

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

April 15, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo  
Governor, State of New York  
Executive Chamber, State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224

The Honorable Carl Heastie  
Speaker, New York State Assembly  
Legislative Office Building, Room 932  
Albany, New York 12248

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader, New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building, Room 907  
Albany, New York 12247

The Honorable John Flanagan  
Minority Leader, New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building, Room 909  
Albany, New York 12247

Mr. Richard Ball  
Commissioner, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets  
10B Airline Drive  
Albany, New York 12235

Dear Governor Cuomo, Legislative Leaders & Commissioner Ball:

As New York's elected leaders, our responsibilities to constituents have never been more important. Your efforts to provide leadership and stability during the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis are genuinely appreciated.

With more than 180,000 cases of the virus, no state has felt the social, economic, and public health effects of the virus like New York. As we identify ways to manage and minimize the devastating impacts of the virus, we must consider immediate steps to provide critical relief to New York State's agricultural industry.

New York State is home to 33,400 farms, including 4,000 dairy farms – they are a pillar of our economy, just as they have been for generations. But more importantly, our farms are the driving force of our food supply. As one of America’s top dairy-producing states, New York’s entire agricultural industry is trying to navigate through unimaginable hardships that necessitate a historic commitment from State leaders.

Measures to prevent the spread of the virus have led to severe disruptions to the dairy industry’s supply chain, dramatic reductions in demand, and have forced many farmers to dump valuable product. The Assembly Minority Conference has compiled a list of recommendations to help our farms survive and stabilize State and local economies. Farmers need immediate help. I hope that we can work collaboratively, along with the appropriate State agencies, to implement these changes and get New York’s agricultural community back on track. Our recommendations include:

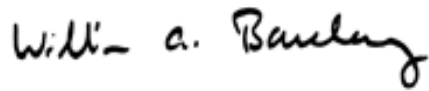
- Suspend, for 1 year, DMV registration requirements for agricultural vehicles and farm trucks;
- Suspend the highway use tax, special hauling permit fees, and collection of New York State tolls for vehicles used to transport agricultural products, including milk;
- Suspend, for 1 year, the 60-hour overtime threshold for farm laborers enacted as part of the 2019 Farm Labor bill;
- Suspend, during the state of emergency period, the 24-hour agricultural rest requirement;
- Extend the Milk Producers Security Fund to help producers who are unable to sell because of COVID-19;
- Use additional federal stimulus money for direct cash infusions for Cornell Cooperative Extensions to assist in the provision of emergency services;
- Use federal stimulus funding to invest in rural broadband infrastructure to assist in the provision of services to farms/rural areas during uncertain social and economic times;
- Provide vouchers for food banks to purchase local dairy and agricultural products; and
- Stipulate “green nurseries” as essential businesses for the remainder of the COVID-19 crisis, so that these businesses can re-open while following social-distancing guidelines.

Since the birth of our nation, farming has been part of the very fabric of our history. Farming represents much more than just an industry or occupation – it is a calling that requires unique character, an unrivaled work ethic, and an unwavering commitment to provide food and products upon which the entire world relies. The survival of our agriculture industry is essential to our collective recovery and our future well-being long after we have defeated the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, time is of the essence. Every day that passes without meaningful action is another day of uncertainty for farming families, or another day farms move closer to closing their doors. We hope the State can act with speed, urgency, and collaboration to provide substantial relief to New York’s farmers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Will Barclay  
Assembly Minority Leader



Ken Blankenbush  
117<sup>th</sup> Assembly District




Jake Ashby  
107<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Kevin Byrne  
94<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Clifford W. Crouch  
122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



David DiPietro  
147<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Michael Fitzpatrick  
8<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Chris Tague  
102<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



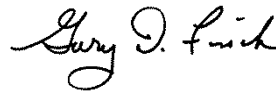
Karl Brabenec  
98<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



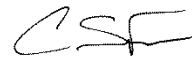
Marjorie Byrnes  
133<sup>rd</sup> Assembly



Joe DeStefano  
3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



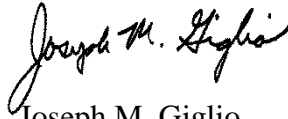
Gary D. Finch  
126<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Christopher S. Friend  
124<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



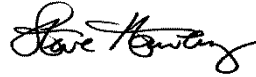
Andrew Garbarino  
7<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Joseph M. Giglio  
148<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Andy Goodell  
150<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Steve Hawley  
139<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mark Johns  
135<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian M. Kolb  
131<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Kieran Michael Lalor  
105<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Peter Lawrence  
134<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike LiPetri  
9<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Nicole Malliotakis  
64<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



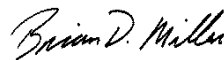
Brian Manktelow  
130<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Dave McDonough  
14<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



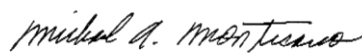
John Mikulin  
17<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian Miller  
101<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Melissa "Missy" Miller  
20<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



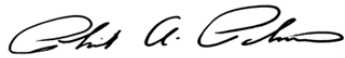
Michael Montesano  
15<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Angelo Morinello  
145<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike Norris  
144<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Phil Palmesano  
132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Anthony Palumbo  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Ed Ra  
19<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike Reilly  
62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



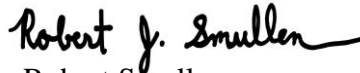
John Salka  
121<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Colin Schmitt  
99<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Doug Smith  
5<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Robert Smullen  
118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Daniel Stec  
114<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mark Walczyk  
116<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mary Beth Walsh  
112<sup>th</sup> Assembly District