



August 25, 2010

Peter Kiernan, Chief Counsel
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Re: The Public Infrastructure Priority Act (A8011B/S5560B)

Dear Mr. Kiernan:

Last November, at the Vision Long Island Smart Growth Summit, Governor Paterson eloquently asserted that “Smart Growth is the pressing progress of the future rather than the comfort of the present.” The Governor also noted that “not making smart growth choices” may explain why 49 states have declining revenues. American Farmland Trust appreciates the Governor’s recognition of the need for planning and foresight to better position our State as we seek to maintain a competitive edge in responding to the changing needs of the 21st century economy.

These are the very goals the Public Infrastructure Priority Act (A8011B/S5560B) seeks to address and we strongly urge the Governor to sign the bill into law. This bill instructs State Agencies, Authorities and Public Corporations to align their spending on infrastructure with stated smart growth criteria. In doing this, the agencies must form advisory committees that include environmental and community stakeholders. The agencies must also issue written Smart Growth Impact Statements in regard to their project choices and that includes issuing written justifications for projects deemed vital that do not meet smart growth criteria.

We believe this bill will help to realize the vision and pragmatic approaches so articulately expressed by the Governor. Your signing this important legislation will help to ensure that:

- New York targets infrastructure funds in a way to stem the loss of productive farmland – an irreplaceable resource that is being lost every day. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, a farm is lost to poorly planned development roughly every 3 days in New York.
- New Yorkers get the best possible bang for the buck from our limited infrastructure money.
- The state’s agricultural industry will be viable in the future by targeting investments away from poorly planned development on valuable farmland and towards food processors and related businesses connected with New York’s farm economy.

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE
112 Spring Street Suite 207 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
Tel: (518) 581-0078 Fax: (518) 581-0079
www.farmland.org/newyork

- State expenditures for infrastructure projects increasingly become investments toward an economically and environmentally sustainable future – whether in farming communities, on main streets or in town centers.
- State public health concerns in regard to diabetes, obesity and heart disease can be met by designing and building communities where food and other farm products can be grown, processed and marketed locally and walking and riding bicycles is safe and practical.
- New York focuses on fix-it-first infrastructure so that our subways and our wastewater treatment plants continue to protect our environment and keep us healthy and prosperous.

American Farmland Trust urges the Governor to sign this bill which will have a positive impact on our state and our communities well beyond 2010 - creating a legacy of thoughtful and sustainable growth for New York State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Haight". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

David Haight
New York State Director