

NO FARMS, NO FOOD

STRONG FARM AND FOOD ECONOMY · HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT · NUTRITIOUS FOOD

PROTECTING FARMLAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

New York's farmers are stewards to approximately 7 million acres of land – approximately 25% of the land in the state. Agriculture's landscape scale impact makes New York farmers a significant partner in enhancing water quality, mitigating the impacts of climate change, providing wildlife habitat and improving the overall health of the state's environment.

Land and water are the natural building blocks of a healthy, local food system. However, the limited availability and access to farmland is a major limiting factor in feeding state residents with food grown within the state. According to recent research from Cornell University, the state's 7 million acres of land in farms can grow food for only 6 million of the state's 19 million residents. Conversion and fragmentation of New York's farm landscape by poorly planned development further diminishes the ability of New York farms to feed the state's residents in the future. A farm is developed every three days in New York with approximately 26,000 acres of productive farmland being lost each year.

Environmental Protection Fund

The Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) is a dedicated fund for more than 30 environmental programs that protect the state's air, land and water resources. The fund receives its revenue from the state's real estate transfer tax and supports programs that protect farmland and create parks, promote recycling and protect clean drinking water, support zoos and other community programs that promote a healthy environment. Specific programs funded by the EPF include: Farmland Protection Program, Conservation Partnership Program, Agricultural Nonpoint Source Program and Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Budget Message: Restore funding from proposed \$143 million to \$222 million in 2009-10 State Budget.

Farmland Protection Program

The Farmland Protection Program helps permanently protect irreplaceable farmland while providing capital that many farmers reinvest in their farm businesses. As of May 2009, this program has awarded more than \$173.3 million to permanently protect 72,668 acres on 303 farms in 29 counties. 152 projects have closed that have protected 29,180 acres of farmland. Such projects enable farmers to tap into one of their largest sources of equity, their land, and use these funds to reinvest in their business and community.

Budget Message: Restore funding from proposed \$10.5 million to \$23 million in 2009-10 State Budget.

Conservation Partnership Program

This program builds the capacity of nonprofit land trusts that work to protect and steward land across New York, including farmland and community gardens. Over the past seven years, the Conservation Partnership Program has used \$4.5 million in appropriated funds to leverage more than \$10 million, advancing 275 land stewardship, community outreach, and community conservation projects all across the state.

Budget Message: Maintain funding as proposed at \$1.57 million.