

Date

Senator/Assemblymember \_\_\_\_\_

LOB Rm \_\_\_\_\_

Albany, NY \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to ask for your support for funding for New York's Farmland Protection Program (FPP). This program provides strengthens farms and related businesses as farmers are paid to protect their land and frequently reinvest the proceeds in buying new tractors and equipment, constructing new buildings, reducing business debt and spurring rural economies. At the same time, irreplaceable farmland is being permanently protected for future generations.

**Insert an example or examples of how farms are important to your local community or the impacts that FPP has had on farms in your community.**

The need for funding from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) like FPP has never been higher. In 2008, there were \$156.5 million in FPP projects pending across New York to protect 181 farms on 49,500 acres. This represents 7 times more demand for funding than the \$22 million in funding available in the 2009-10 State Budget.

**Include an example of continued need for FPP funds in your community.**

It is widely recognized that difficult budget decisions will need to be made by state leaders in the coming weeks and months. However, Governor Paterson's FY 2010-11 State Budget proposal would disproportionately cut EPF funding by 35%, including a 55% reduction in FPP funding. I am asking for your leadership in strengthening New York's commitment to our farms, local food security, rural economy and environment. I hope you will actively support:

- Appropriating \$222 Million for the EPF including \$23 million for FPP;
- Opposing "offloads" of program costs to the EPF that have traditionally paid from other areas of the budget and diminish funding for core environmental programs like FPP;
- Developing a Multi-Year EPF Repayment Plan to make up for the roughly \$500 million borrowed from the EPF for non-environmental funding that has left the state unable to fulfill its EPF funding commitments.

Thank you for your commitment to programs like the state's Farmland Protection Program that are spurring New York's economy while protecting our environment and strengthening our communities.

Sincerely,