

Senator Charles Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington D.C. 20510

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand  
478 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington D.C.20510

Congressman Mark Molinaro  
1207 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington D.C. 20515

Congressman Nicholas Langworthy  
1630 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear (Senator, Congressman)

The New York Forest Owners Association urges Congress to pass a Farm Bill *during* the lame duck session, *before* the new Congress. The Farm Bill supports a plethora of interests that are the bedrock of this country, including agriculture, wildlife, and the sustainability of our forests. Delaying passing this vital bill will only create more uncertainty and hardship for Americans who rely on Farm Bill programs and will hinder important conservation work on sustainably managed forests and woodlands across New York State.

The woods, forests, and open spaces across New York State cover almost 65 percent of the land in the State (19 million acres) with 200,000 private owners holding 75 percent of New York's forests in sizes ranging from 10 to several hundred acres. An additional 500,000 private owners have very small patches of woods ranging in size from 1 to 10 acres. All areas contribute greatly to the economy and healthy environment that all New Yorkers enjoy and provide essential needs: wood products, food supplies, wildlife habitat, watershed retention values, carbon sequestration, and others. New York forests produce \$10 billion of wood products, provide safe water supply for 16 million people, support an outdoor recreation economy of \$3.8 billion, and contain essential wildlife habitat.

The Farm Bill contains several provisions of particular importance to New York:

Reauthorizing and streamlining the Regional Conservation Partnership Program – The potential of RCPP to create a pathway for innovative public-private partnerships across regional landscapes has been hindered by current administrative processes.

In the face of increasing conversion of farms and forestland to other uses like commercial and residential development or wind and solar energy projects, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a critical incentive for keeping forests as forests. However, CRP forestry acres

under contract have increasingly declined in the past decade. Alterations are needed to support more forestry enrollment in the program.

We wrote to you earlier this year to urge the inclusion of the Rural Forest Markets Act (RFMA) in the Farm Bill. The RFMA will help remove the high costs of implementing forest improvement practices faced by our family forest owners. The RFMA authorizes USDA to provide loan guarantees, and bond guarantees to help private forest owners participate in the voluntary carbon market.

The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) promotes sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship of privately owned woodlands in New York State through local chapter and statewide activities such as woods walks and tours, the bi-monthly New York Forest Owner magazine and communications with legislators. We welcome the opportunity to tell you of our concerns and appreciate your consideration of our request.

Yours truly,

Edward Neuhauser  
President, New York Forest Owners Association

Hugh Canham  
Chair, NYFOA Legislative Affairs