

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

*We still have a hunger problem ... [but] there is no excuse for why any man, woman, or child should go hungry in the state of New York.*

—Andrew Cuomo, 2015

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As you know, we live in a modern, comparatively affluent state in which hunger remains a persistent problem. In 2014, almost 2.7 million New Yorkers relied on emergency food programs, and 16% of respondents to a Food Research & Action Center survey said they were still struggling to afford enough food for their households. We thank you for your efforts to date to combat hunger and poverty.

Signing Senate Bill 7833/Assembly Bill 10584 into law would be another step forward in this fight. The “Farm to Food Bank” bill allows New York farmers to receive a refundable tax credit for donations made to food banks and other emergency food programs serving low-income New Yorkers. If enacted, it would benefit New York farmers by making it more economically feasible for them to donate food to those in need; the bill would also benefit the environment by decreasing food waste and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from landfills; and, most importantly, it would benefit impoverished, food-insecure individuals by increasing their access to fresh, healthy produce.

S.7833/A.10584 would permit eligible farmers to claim a refundable tax credit equal to 25% of the wholesale cost of their qualified donations to food banks or other public, charitable, or non-profit emergency food programs, up to \$5,000 per year. The current federal tax deduction does little to incentivize the large number of New York farmers who earn minimal or no farm income to make such donations. A state tax credit to offset the out-of-pocket costs of harvesting, processing, and transporting food that might otherwise go unharvested or undelivered would encourage our farmers to give more generously than they already do. Let's provide them this incentive.

Fresh fruits and vegetables left unharvested or dumped in landfills due to imperfect aesthetics, market fluctuations, or other economic considerations contribute to food waste and greenhouse gas emissions. They are also a monumental waste of resources such as water, labor, energy, land, and fertilizer. Food scraps that wind up in landfills rot, producing methane gas, which is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide in driving global warming. The Farm to Food Bank bill would reduce food waste and mitigate New York's contribution to greenhouse gases while simultaneously providing fresh, nutritious food to the hungry.

If you do the math, a farmer who receives the maximum \$5,000 tax credit would have actually provided \$20,000 worth of fresh food (at wholesale prices) to an emergency food program. For those who don't always know where their next meal is coming from, such donations have the potential to positively impact their health outcomes in the long-term and meet their immediate food needs in the short-term. Fresh, locally grown food that might otherwise go to waste can now be distributed to New York's neediest populations via the emergency food programs that serve them.

It's not often that one piece of legislation produces across-the-board benefits for so many for well under a million dollars. S.7833/A.10584 has strong bipartisan support (it passed unanimously in both chambers) and represents a win for our farming families, a win for the environment, and a win for New York's hungry men, women, and children.

For this reason, we, the undersigned, strongly support this bill and respectfully request that you sign it into law.

Sincerely,

Hunger Action Network of New York State (HANNYS)  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
New York Farm Bureau  
Hunger Solutions New York  
Food Bank Association of New York State  
Food Bank For New York City  
Food Bank for Westchester  
Food Bank of Central New York  
Food Bank of the Southern Tier  
Food Bank of Western New York  
Island Harvest  
Long Island Cares, Inc  
Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York  
The Food Pantries for the Capital District  
Make the Road New York  
City Harvest  
Feeding America  
Foodlink  
Hunger Free America  
Agricultural Stewardship Association  
American Farmland Trust  
Catskill Mountainkeeper  
Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship  
Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE)  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County  
Earthjustice  
Empire Justice Center  
Farmers Market Federation of NY  
Food & Water Watch

Just Food  
National Council of Jewish Women New York  
New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV)  
New York School Nutrition Association  
Northeast Dairy Foods Association, Inc  
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)  
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)  
NYPIRG  
River Fund  
Scenic Hudson  
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter  
Watershed Agricultural Council  
WESPAC Foundation  
Whole Foods Market  
AIDS Center of Queens County (ACQC)  
Alexandria Community Food Pantry  
Alliance for Positive Health  
Amagansett Food Institute  
Apple Hills, LLC  
Association for Mental Health and Wellness  
Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger  
Beth-Hark Christian Counseling Center, Inc  
Bnai Raphael Chesed Organization, Inc  
Bread of Life Outreach Center  
Broadway Community / 4 Star Soup Kitchen  
Bronx Bethany Community Corp  
Brookfield Food Cupboard  
Calvary Food Pantry  
Cameron Community Ministries  
Capital Roots  
Catholic Charities of Broome County  
Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga  
Charles Settlement House  
Christ Disciples International Ministries, Inc  
Christ Jesus Baptist Church Food Pantry  
Community Center of Northern Westchester  
Community Health Action of Staten Island  
Community Help in Park Slope (CHiPS)  
Community Impact at Columbia University  
Community Services Housing Development Corp  
Council of Jewish Organizations Staten Island Food Pantry  
Cuyler-Warren United Methodist Church  
EAC Network Meals on Wheels  
East New York Farms!  
East Rochester Community Resource Center  
Elmira Community Kitchen / Catholic Charities of Chemung & Schuyler Counties  
Family of Woodstock  
Feed My Sheep Community Food Pantry

First United Methodist Church of Schenectady  
Food for All Erie County  
Food Pantry and Social Justice Ministries, Church of St. Vincent De Paul  
Franklin Community Center  
Friendship Donations Network  
Garden of Eve Organic Farm & Market  
Gouverneur Neighborhood Center  
Greater Galway Community Services Association Food Pantry  
Greenpoint Reformed Church Hunger Program  
Groton Food Providers  
Harlem Community Nutritional Service Agency  
Harrisville Food Pantry  
Hartwick /Mt. Vision Food Pantry  
Help from People to People  
Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen  
Hour Children Food Pantry  
Hudson River Housing, Inc  
iEat Green, LLC  
Jewish Community Center of Staten Island  
Kerith SDA Church  
Lily's Farm  
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry at St. Joseph the Worker  
Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry at Walkkill Reformed Church  
Loaves and Fishes Outreach Soup Kitchen at The Rome Wesleyan Church  
LOOP Ministries  
Lost Sheep Christian Center for All  
Lowville Food Pantry, Inc  
Massena First United Methodist Church Soup Kitchen  
McGraw Community Food Pantry  
Mercy INN Soup Kitchen  
Milk Pail, LLC  
Mission Share Outreach Center  
Natural Contents Kitchen  
Nazareth Housing  
New Covenant Community Development Corp  
Newman Memorial Church Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen  
North Country Ministry, Inc  
Open Arms Care Center Emergency Food Pantry  
Otego Community Food Pantry  
Our Father's Kitchen  
Pantry of Angels  
Pavilion Community Food Pantry  
Project Hospitality  
Restoration Society, Inc  
Reynoldsville Food Pantry  
Ridgewood Older Adult Center  
Schenectady Inner City Ministry  
Schuyler Outreach Food Pantry / Catholic Charities of Chemung & Schuyler Counties

Sinclairville Food Cupboard  
Slow Food North Shore  
Slow Food NYC  
South West Ecumenical Ministries, Inc  
Southtowns Christian Center Food Pantry  
St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction  
St. Anthony of Padua Food Pantry  
St. Bernard Social Parish Ministry  
St. Francis of Rome Food Pantry  
St. Louis de Montfort RC Church Parish Outreach  
St. Margaret's Episcopal Church Feeding Program  
St. Mary's Church Food Pantry  
St. Vincent DePaul, Elmont  
Staten Island CSA  
Staten Island Hunger Task Force  
Sunnyside CSA  
Temple Shaaray Tefila  
The Albany Damien Center, LLC  
The Country Pantry  
The Greater Sayville Food Pantry  
The Lunch Box, Program of Dutchess Outreach  
The Retreat, Inc  
Ulster Corps  
United Yes We Can, Unidas Se Se Puede, Inc  
Wayne County Action Program, Inc  
Wilson Community Food Pantry  
Yellow Barn Biodynamic Farm