

1 **2025 NYSAC Legislative Conference**
2 **Standing Committee on Agriculture, Economic Development & Rural**
3 **Affairs**
4 **Resolution #2**

5
6 **Resolution Urging New York State to Fund State-Mandated Agricultural**
7 **District Reviews**
8

9 **WHEREAS**, the 2022 Census of Agriculture outlined a concerning trend in U.S.
10 agriculture, including fewer farms, reduced farmland, and larger average farm sizes; and

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12 **WHEREAS**, New York is experiencing these challenges at an accelerated rate, with a 14
13 percent loss in farms and a nine percent loss in farmland between 2012 and 2022; and

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15 **WHEREAS**, according to the USDA 2022 Census of Agriculture, since 2017, New York
16 State of has seen a decline of 2,788 farms, including 1,865 dairy farms and 363,885 acres
17 of farmland; and

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19 **WHEREAS**, while the state achieved a significant milestone of over 100,000 acres of
20 protected farmland in 2023, more than 98 percent of New York’s farmland remains
21 unprotected; and

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23 **WHEREAS**, Governor Hochul has proposed making investments to improve “tracking
24 of lost farmland, and capacity building within New York’s network of community led
25 land trusts to efficiently execute Environmental Bond Act dollars allocated for farmland
26 protection;” and

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28 **WHEREAS**, Article 25-AA of the Agriculture & Markets (AGM) Law, enacted in 1971,
29 empowered counties to create and maintain county agricultural districts to protect and
30 promote the availability of land for farming purposes through county agricultural and
31 farmland protection boards; and

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33 **WHEREAS**, agricultural districts are a critical tool for farmland preservation and
34 conservation, providing benefits and protections that only apply to farming operations
35 and land used in agricultural production; and

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37 **WHEREAS**, under Section 303-a of Article 25-AA, counties are required to conduct
38 comprehensive reviews of agricultural districts every eight years, producing the state’s
39 most detailed and accurate data about farmland conversion and agricultural viability;
40 and

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42 **WHEREAS**, the requirement constitutes a vital but unfunded mandate on counties,
43 requiring significant staff time and resources to complete detailed parcel-level analyses,
44 conduct public hearings, provide statutorily required notifications, and prepare
45 comprehensive reports; and

1 **WHEREAS**, accurate tracking of farmland changes through agricultural district
2 reviews is essential for developing effective farmland protection strategies and targeting
3 preservation efforts where they are most needed.

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5 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the New York State Association of
6 Counties (NYSAC) commends Governor Hochul for enhancing state funding for the
7 creation and implementation of county and municipal agricultural and farmland
8 protection plans through Part OO of the Transportation, Economic Development and
9 Environmental Conservation (TED) Article VII legislation; and

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11 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NYSAC urges the Governor and Legislature to amend
12 TED Part OO to include funding for 100 percent of the state-mandated eight-year
13 agricultural district reviews under AGM Article 25-AA Section 303-a; and

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15 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, since these eight-year agricultural district reviews are
16 the primary mechanism by which New York State tracks farmland changes at the parcel
17 level and evaluates the effectiveness of agricultural districts in protecting viable
18 farmland, NYSAC believes state funding support for these reviews is critical to achieving
19 the Governor’s goal of improved farmland tracking; and

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21 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, copies of this resolution be sent to the counties of
22 New York State encouraging member counties to enact similar resolutions; and

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24 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, NYSAC shall forward copies of this resolution to
25 Governor Kathy Hochul, the New York State Legislature, Commissioner of the
26 Department of Agriculture and Markets, and all others deemed necessary and proper.