



PRESS RELEASE

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### **STATEWIDE COALITION APPLAUDS GOVERNOR CUOMO'S 'NO STUDENT GOES HUNGRY' PROPOSAL**

**January 2, 2018, Albany, NY** – *New York Grown Foods for New York Kids*, a coalition with nearly 70 public health, school, farm, anti-hunger and environmental organizations, applauds Governor Andrew Cuomo's 'No Student Goes Hungry' proposal in the 2018 State of the State.

The proposal would double the size of the state's Farm to School grants program while offering the largest state incentive in the country to help schools purchase healthy food grown on local farms. Thus, it would provide economic opportunities for local farmers and job growth in rural communities while improving the health of the 1.7 million kids eating meals in K-12 schools across New York.

According to a [recent report](#) by American Farmland Trust and New York Academy of Medicine, if institutions, such as K-12 schools, receiving state funds to buy food spent at least 25% of their food dollars on food grown in New York, it could add another \$200 million to the state's economy while positively impacting the health of 6.6 million New Yorkers.

"American Farmland Trust applauds Governor Cuomo's leadership in ensuring more fresh or minimally processed foods grown in New York will be served in school cafeterias across the state, while expanding market opportunities for local farmers," said **David Haight, New York State Director for American Farmland Trust**. "This proposal positions New York at the progressive front of a national movement to provide healthier food choices to our children, while keeping more dollars spent on food in our local economy."

"The New York School Nutrition Association could not think of a better way to start off the new year than by seeing a plan that will benefit both the children and the economy in New York State. We all know how expensive it is to buy food, and the much needed increase in the reimbursement rate for schools will help bridge the gap to purchasing more local NY products," said **Jennifer Martin, Executive Director of New York School Nutrition Association**.

"New York Farm Bureau applauds Governor Cuomo's proposal to get more farm fresh food into school lunch programs across the state. It is a win-win plan that expands markets for family farms while putting more fresh, nutritious food on to students' plates. We look forward to working with our coalition partners to advocate for the inclusion of the funding in the final New York State budget," said **David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau President**.

"We would like to thank Governor Cuomo for his leadership on this issue. Doubling the funding for the Farm to School program, incentivizing local procurement for school lunches, and establishing food

pantries on college campuses will provide some of New York's most nutritionally vulnerable residents with fresh, healthy foods that are also associated with a lower incidence of chronic disease. Ensuring that fresh, healthy, locally grown food has a permanent place on the public plate will provide important contributions to advancing the New York State Prevention Agenda—a critical element of the work of the Academy's Institute for Urban Health," said **Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS, president of the New York Academy of Medicine.**

"The NYC public schools School Food organization, as the originator of NY Thursday menu concept, is thrilled to learn about this incentive program and all the Governor is doing to both end childhood hunger and promote NYS agriculture," said **Eric Goldstein, CEO of NYC School Food within the NYC Department of Education.**

"The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) commends Governor Cuomo for his forward-thinking efforts to improve access to local foods for New York's school children", said **ANCA's Josh Bakelaar.** "This proposal will help reduce food insecurity and strengthen the food system - outcomes that make our communities and economies healthier and more sustainable."

"The Governor's efforts to address this issue is greatly appreciated. We are pleased to be part of this coalition advocating for more funding for school meals and promoting the purchase of locally grown and produced food," said **Michael Borges, Executive Director for the New York State Association of School Business Officials.**

"We are thrilled with the Governor's announcement to support children in his "No Student Goes Hungry" proposal. Food insecurity and hunger are real issues for families, and we are extremely pleased that Governor Cuomo will be addressing these critical issues in his State of the State and Executive Budget. We also fully support the prohibition on lunch shaming and expansion of the Farm to School Program, and look forward to state fiscal and programmatic support for these initiatives. NYS PTA continues to stand ready to support ALL families and children, and looks forward to working with the state and schools to successfully implement these programs," said **Gracemarie Rozea, President, NYS PTA.**

"This proposal will help get more fresh, healthy food to children facing hunger across the state," said **Margaret Brown, attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council.** "Too many children in New York struggle with where their next meal is coming from, and their school cafeteria plays a critical role in feeding them every day. This impressive plan will help the state's schools meet this critical need and boost the state's agricultural economy at the same time."

"The Tisch Food Center is thrilled to see Governor Cuomo's "No Student Goes Hungry" proposal. Increased investment in nutritious, locally sourced school meals, alongside great nutrition education, is a recipe for children who are nourished and ready to learn. Add to that an end to lunch shaming, and increased support for Breakfast After the Bell, and this announcement is a win for New York students, families, and farmers," said **Claire Uno, Deputy Director, Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy,** Teachers College Columbia University.

"When the drive to serve and protect our children in the best possible ways rises to the top - to our leadership - it marks a special era in advocacy and progressiveness. Thank you, Governor Cuomo for being such a leader and for caring about each child as if it they were your own," said **Julia Van Loon, Owner of Slate Foods/Slate Farm to School Beef - NYS Grown and Certified.**

"Healthy Schools Network strongly supports enhanced funding for the state's Farm to School program so that more school children can enjoy fresh local foods," said **Claire Barnett, Executive Director, Healthy Schools Network**.

"We are thrilled that Governor Cuomo has proposed doubling funding for the Farm to School Program in his Executive Budget. NYLCV has long called for the expansion of this successful initiative, which helps local farmers as well as school districts looking to increase local foods on school menus, improves student health, and increases agriculture education. We strongly urge the State Senate and Assembly to support the inclusion of this increase in the final budget," said **Marcia Bystry, President of the New York League of Conservation Voters**.

"We are thrilled to see the incredible progress put forward in Governor Cuomo's 'No Student Goes Hungry' Program. Every day, FoodCorps works to connect kids to healthy food in schools in New York City and across the country. We've seen firsthand the positive impacts that breakfast after the bell programs, farm-to-school efforts, and local food procurement can have on getting kids to fall in love with healthy food and eat it every day. The Governor's proposal will ensure more kids across the Empire State are fueled to learn and succeed," said **Kumar Chandran, Policy Director at FoodCorps**.

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**About American Farmland Trust:**

*American Farmland Trust is the only national conservation organization dedicated to protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices and keeping farmers on the land. Since 1980 American Farmland Trust has helped to permanently protect more than five million acres of farm and ranch land. Learn more at: [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org).*

**About New York School Nutrition Association:**

*The New York School Nutrition Association (NYSNA) is a non-profit professional organization representing over 4,000 school nutrition professionals across the state. NYSNA and its members are dedicated to making healthy school meals and nutrition education available to all students. For more information on NYSNA, visit [www.nyschoolnutrition.org](http://www.nyschoolnutrition.org).*