



April 19, 2022

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
The Capital
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Capital Region Chamber regarding a critical issue confronting New York's agriculture sector. Earlier this year, the Farm Labor Wage Board voted, by a 2-1 margin, to recommend lowering the overtime threshold on New York farms from 60 to 40 hours. Those recommendations will adversely impact farms, farm workers and consumers.

Across our great state, more than 33,000 farms support 55,000 jobs and generate billions in economic activity. The Capital Region is home to more than 1,000 of these farms. These small businesses are an essential part of our economy and help feed our communities.

New York's farms have provided more than forty million pounds of food to hungry families across the state during the pandemic through the Nourish New York program. This was an important measure that will be undercut if the overtime is lowered to 40 hours.

Families that do not need the Nourish NY program will still feel the impact through higher prices for agricultural goods at the grocery store. Bear in mind that over the last 12 months, inflation has already increased food costs by 8.8 percent. This costly combination is the last thing struggling consumers need right now.

In addition to consumers, farms and agri-businesses that support farms will be impacted by a lower overtime threshold. Even with the inclusion of the overtime tax credit in this year's budget, there is no guarantee that it will be workable now or even available in the future.

In short, the future of farming in New York is at stake. I urge your administration to stand in solidarity with farmers, farm workers and consumers and reject the Wage Board's overtime recommendations. Thank you for your consideration of the Capital Region Chamber's perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark N. Eagan'.

Mark N. Eagan, CCE
President & CEO

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ONE VOICE, ONE MISSION, ONE REGION.**

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