

VETO MESSAGE - No. 167

TO THE SENATE:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, the following bill:

Senate Bill Number 4900, entitled:

"AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law and the public lands law, in relation to access to viable agricultural land for new and beginning farmers"

NOT APPROVED

This bill would require the Department of Agriculture and Markets to establish a program to promote the transfer of viable agricultural land from existing owners to new farmers and, in cooperation with the Office of General Services, to collect, compile, and publish information on State-owned public land, as well as private land, that may be viable for farming.

My support for the intent of this bill has not wavered since it was first introduced in 2014. For example, in 2014, I established the New York State New Farms Grant Fund, which provides grants to support beginning farmers who have chosen farming as a career and substantially participate in the production of an agricultural product on their farms. The Fund has provided approximately \$2.5 million to farmers since its inception, including \$1 million that was allocated in this year's budget. In addition, the Department established a Beginning Farmer Working Group, which is examining a broad range of issues important to new farmers, including access to viable farm land.

Yet like its three predecessors, this year's bill suffers from the same fiscal concerns. (Veto No. 537 of 2014, Veto No. 201 of 2015, and Veto No. 248 of 2016). Specifically, it would create a new program without an established funding source, and thus impose a substantial burden on taxpayers. I remain committed to discussing this proposal in the context of the annual State budget negotiations, which will provide an opportunity for the Executive and the Legislature to fully vet the bill's fiscal implications and determine whether consensus on an appropriation can be reached. Until then, I must again veto this bill.

The bill is disapproved.

(signed) ANDREW M. CUOMO
