

August 14, 2012

Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine  
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets  
10B Airline Drive  
Albany, NY 12235

President Seth W. Pinsky  
NYC Economic Development Corporation  
110 William Street  
New York, NY 10038

President Kenneth Adams  
NYS Empire State Development  
95 Perry Street, Suite 500  
Buffalo, NY 14203

Dear Commissioner Aubertine, President Pinsky and President Adams:

We are writing to offer our strong support for the creation of a wholesale farmers' market in the Hunts Point area of the South Bronx and to offer our assistance to make this project a reality.

As you know, your agencies are currently involved in negotiations to finalize a \$350 million modernization plan for Hunts Point Produce Market. This 45-year-old food hub, the largest in the nation, supplies an estimated 22 million people in the region with fruit and vegetables – including 60% of New York City's produce supply. At the same time, however, only about 4 percent of the \$2.3 billion in annual sales at the Produce Market comes from food grown on New York State farms.

Recognizing the need to create better markets for locally grown food, Governor Cuomo stated in his 2011 State of the State address that the Hunts Point revitalization should follow a "two-pronged approach." In addition to renovating the Market's existing infrastructure, he called for the creation of a "major wholesale 'farmers' market'" in Hunts Point that would "provide an avenue for local farmers to market their produce directly to the New York City metropolitan area." The Governor added: "This project will further enhance the Upstate economy by completing the cycle of production to consumption all within a few hundred miles."

It is estimated that such a wholesale farmers' market in Hunts Point could draw almost \$900 million in sales for locally grown food, thus providing an immediate economic boost to both upstate growers and downstate suppliers. Supporting regional farming can also have a significant economic multiplier effect in rural communities, supporting farm-dependent services such as feed and seed stores, veterinarians, and equipment dealers.

Building a new wholesale farmers' market in Hunts Point can also be a national model that helps to protect valuable state agricultural lands. Indeed, over the last 25 years, New York has lost almost 70 acres of farmland per day. Thus, supporting local farms through a new Hunts Point outlet would also prove environmentally beneficial by preserving farmland and aiding small and medium-sized regional growers.

Additionally, a wholesale farmers' market – with critical input from the community – could also directly benefit the surrounding Hunts Point neighborhood by providing a new outlet for fresh fruit and vegetables from local growers. Ironically, the Hunts Point community, which sits adjacent to a vast supply of food, is one of the hungriest in the United States. And given that this neighborhood has some of the city's highest per capita rates of diabetes and obesity, gaining access to fresher and more nutritious produce is an urgent public health need. Additionally, it is important that the overall Produce Market's renovation meets the highest green standards, which would yield additional environmental and public health gains for the community and the city at large.

In sum, we respectfully request that any final agreement to modernize the Produce Market include the creation of a wholesale farmers' market in Hunts Point where regional growers can sell their produce to schools, supermarkets, restaurants and other large buyers. As the *New York Times* recently editorialized, the Governor and the Mayor should make sure this final deal incorporates "a central place for local farmers." We stand ready to assist your offices in advancing this crucial project for the health of the state's economy, environment and people.

Sincerely,\*

David Haight  
American Farmland Trust

Stefania Patinella  
The Children's Aid Society

Hilary Baum  
Baum Forum

Peter R. Paden  
Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc.

Sonia Janiszewski  
Catskills Collaborative Regional  
Alliance for Farmer Training

Shannon Mason  
Cowbella Fine Farmstead Dairy Products

Ramsay Adams  
Catskill Mountainkeeper

Amy Miller  
Early Bird Cookery

Sonia Janiszewski  
Catskills FarmLink

James T. B. Tripp  
Environmental Defense Fund

Rebecca Morgan  
Center for Agricultural Development  
and Entrepreneurship

Lynn Fredericks  
FamilyCook Productions

Hilary Baum  
Chefs for the Marcellus

Sonia Janiszewski  
Farm Catskills

Jill Wiener  
Farmhearts

Kristin Pederson & Ed Yowell  
Food Systems Network NYC

Kathleen Frith & Judith LaBelle  
Glynwood Center

Marcel Van Ooyen  
GrowNYC

Andrew T. Chmar  
Hudson Highlands Land Trust

Mark Dunlea  
Hunger Action Network of NYS

Jill Roche  
Hunts Point Alliance for Children

Karen Washington  
La Familia Verde

Majora Carter  
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HomeTOWN Security Labs

Mark Ruffalo  
Actor

Kathrine Gregory  
Mi Kitchen es Su Kitchen

Wanda Salaman  
Mothers on the Move

Danielle Gaebel  
Natural Contents

Mark Izeman & Johanna Dyer  
Natural Resources Defense Council

Ana Garcia  
New York Academy of Medicine

Joel Berg  
NYC Coalition Against Hunger

Raymond Figueroa  
NYC Community Garden Coalition

Dean Norton  
New York Farm Bureau

Jacquie Berger  
Just Food

Steve Rosenberg  
Scenic Hudson

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Katharine Marsiglio  
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Development

Michael Brotchner  
Sustainable South Bronx

Anna Hammond  
The Sylvia Center

Mary Tonjes & Jim Tonjes  
Tonjes Farm Dairy

Craig Cashman  
Watershed Agricultural Council

Cecil D. Corbin-Mark  
WEACT for Environmental Justice

Greg Swartz  
Willow Wisp Organic Farm

\*Signatories as of August 14, 2012.

Cc: The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg  
The Honorable Christine C. Quinn