



March 4, 2022

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Todd Kaminsky
Chair, Senate Envtl. Conservation Committee
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Steven Englebright
Chair, Assembly Envtl. Conservation
Committee
New York State Assembly
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Liz Krueger
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Helene E. Weinstein
Chair, Assembly Ways and Means Committee
New York State Assembly
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Esteemed Legislative Leaders,

New York is poised to be a national leader in promoting healthy soils. With your support for the **\$15 million for Soil and Water Conservation Districts and \$17.5 million for the Climate Resilient Farming program proposed in the 2022-23 Executive Budget**, we can make great strides towards building a culture of soil care in NY. The Policy Committee of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY) strongly encourages your support for these budget items. We are a group of farmers, gardeners and industry experts working together to grow awareness and support for advancing state and federal

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soil health efforts in alignment with NOFA-NY's vision for a just and resilient farming system grounded in a diverse community now and for future generations.

As Governor Hochul noted in her [State of the State address](#), the Climate Resilient Farming grant program has been oversubscribed by about 50% in the last two rounds of funding.¹ This indicates a growing appetite for this work and underscores the importance of supporting this funding. The projects funded so far are responsible for [eliminating an estimated 319,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year](#) through soil health, water quality and waste management projects.² Expanding soil health systems that include cover cropping, inter cropping, crop rotation, reduced tillage, rotational grazing and using organic amendments, not only reduces emissions, they also increase farm resilience to extreme weather, and provide numerous ecosystem services including improved water quality and enriched habitat that nurtures biodiversity.

Healthy soil is a cornerstone of organic agriculture. As organic advocates, we have been adopting and adapting soil health practices into our farming systems for decades. We are encouraged by the expansion of regenerative practices throughout the agriculture community. Soil health projects funded through the Climate Resilient Farming Program and administered by Soil and Water Conservation Districts are key in working towards the goals of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, and the Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Act (A5386/S4722). We encourage you to support maintaining the \$15 million for Soil and Water Conservation Districts and \$17.5 million for the Climate Resilient Farming program in this year's executive budget.

¹ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/2022StateoftheStateBook.pdf>

² <https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2022/01/crfawardedprojectdescriptions.pdf>

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We also want to emphasize the need for soil health projects and other agricultural- and forestry-based climate change mitigation strategies to be fully funded long term. The 2019 passage of the landmark CLCPA set up the infrastructure to reduce New York emissions by 85% by 2050, but we're running out of time to set up funding mechanisms to make a just transition away from fossil fuels possible. While the Governor has been silent on this problem in her executive budget, we join other advocates from across the state, including the NY Renews Coalition in urging you to include the \$15 Billion for climate and environmental justice in your chambers' one-house resolutions this year.

Sincerely,

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York Policy Committee Members:

Katie Baidon, Policy Coordinator, NOFA-NY, Ithaca, NY

Sean Barrett, Founder, Montauk Seaweed Supply Company, Montauk, NY

Deborah Bigelow, NOFA-NY, Concerned Citizens of Allegany County, CCE Master Gardener

Laura Colligan, Farmer, Dirt Rich Farm, Springville, NY

Elizabeth Henderson, Farmer, Writer, Newark, NY

Liana Hoodes, Policy Advisor, NOFA-NY, Pine Bush, NY

Louis Lego, Elderberry Pond Farm, Auburn, NY

Glenda Neff, Auburn, NY

Dr. Chris Nickell, New York, NY

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