



John Lemondes, Jr.
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 Cayuga and Onondaga Counties

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Rural Equity Conference

Dear Friends:

Rural communities are the foundation of New York State. Our farms, businesses, schools, and residents are integral to our state’s economy and make up a large portion of our Empire State. That is why it is vital that our rural communities are given the attention and resources necessary to make them thrive and are not overshadowed by the urban areas of our state.

I, along with Assemblyman Robert Smullen, will be hosting a Rural Equity Forum with co-host Assembly members, Jeff Gallahan and Brian Miller **on Wednesday, November 29th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Skaneateles Volunteer Fire Department, 77 West Genesee Street, Skaneateles, NY 13125.** Please join me and others to discuss the following topics:

- State assistance for rural communities;
- Connecting rural resources to reduce poverty;
- Rural school transportation;
- Expanding access to broadband and increasing cell service coverage;
- Interregional enrollment in schools;
- Increasing support for those serving their community;
- Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act (CLCPA) rural choice; and
- Other issues affecting our communities.

My Assembly Republican Colleagues and I are eager to hear and receive testimony from residents of our rural communities with firsthand experience.

I hope you can participate in this important forum. If you can attend or have any questions, please contact my district office at: **(315) 255-3045 or (lemondesj@nyassembly.gov)**. Members of the media will also be invited to this important event. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

John Lemondes, Jr.
 Member of Assembly

Assembly Republican Conference



Rural Equity

August 22

A plan for New York's Rural
Resurgence



Assembly Republican Leader Will Barclay

Assemblyman Robert Smullen

www.rrcny.com

STATE ASSISTANCE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES



Create the Rural Equity Assistance Program which connects rural communities with available economic and community development grants and assists in the technical aspects of applying for those grants **(To be introduced, Smullen)**.

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR THOSE SERVING THEIR COMMUNITY



Provide a state income tax credit of \$2,500 for volunteer firefighters and members of a volunteer ambulance corps **(A.2654, Angelino)**.



Create a \$1,500 wage tax credit for employers hiring New York National Guard men and women, reservists, volunteer firefighters, and EMS Personnel **(A.2044, Hawley)**.



Create the New York State Volunteer Fire Protection Emergency Reimbursement Account to reimburse volunteer departments and Emergency Medical Services for PPE **(A.4761, Norris)**.



Allow volunteer firefighters to attend training without being penalized by their employer; and create tax incentives for employing volunteer firefighters **(A.2267, Norris)**.

CONNECTING RURAL RESOURCES TO REDUCE POVERTY



Enact the NY Food Insecurity, Farm Resiliency, and Rural Poverty Initiative:

- Establishes the Permanent Agricultural Purchasing Assistance Program to provide \$10 million in annual funding for food banks to purchase agricultural food products from New York farmers. During times of declared state of emergency, the annual funding will increase to \$20 million.
- Creates the Meat, Fiber and Dairy Processing Incentive Program to increase the available processing capacity for meat, fiber, and dairy products in New York.
- Creates the Personal Service Cost Assistance Program to provide \$2 million annually to offset increased hiring costs for expanded food bank operations.
- Establishes funding for a number of programs designed to assist New York farmers:
 - Beginning Farmers Grant Program;
 - Farm Infrastructure & Equipment Grant Program;
 - Commercial Real Estate & Warehousing Grant Program;
 - Cold Storage Equipment Grant Program;
 - Cold Storage Transportation Grant Program;
 - Transportation Fuel Reimbursement;
 - FarmNet Program.
- Establishes the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program to award contracts to non-profit organizations: City Harvest, Inc. and Island Harvest, Ltd.
- Increases the tax credit allowed to qualified farmers for donating food to any eligible food pantry from 25% to 50% of the fair market value.
- Increases the value of the estate livestock exemption.
- Repeals the Farm Labor Laws signed into law in 2019.
- Provides a \$35.7 million appropriation to the Department of Agriculture & Markets to fund the Initiative (A.5708, Tague).

RURAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION



Allows local Boards of Education to expand Parent Contracts (as authorized in Subdivision 27 of Section 1709 of Education Law) so schools can contract with an approved network of parents, family members, neighbors, and teachers for the purpose of providing pupil transportation and reducing reliance on zero-emission school buses **(To be introduced, Smullen)**.

EXPAND ACCESS TO BROADBAND AND INCREASE CELL COVERAGE



Decentralize the current broadband expansion process by allowing localities to work together and design regionally-based plans to ensure internet access to every rural citizen **(A.4686, Smullen)**.



Design a new incentive program to encourage those who work remotely, and businesses who offer remote work options, to live or have their headquarters based in Rural areas of New York State **(needs to be introduced)**.



Create the Rural Mobile Communications Fund to provide grant opportunities for increasing cellular coverage in rural areas subjected to dropped coverage **(needs to be introduced)**.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT RURAL CHOICE



Allow counties to opt-out of the requirements of the CLCPA (**To be introduced, Tague**).

INTERREGIONAL ENROLLMENT IN SCHOOLS



Establish the "EmpowerED" Act to provide opportunities for students to cross-enroll in classes offered by local schools outside of their home district, and by expanding BOCES services (**To be introduced, Smullen**).