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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
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Dear Governor Cuomo:


I commend your commitment to working with New York's agricultural producers to streamline regulations, facilitate job creation, and grow our economy. In that spirit, I request your assistance in delivering much-needed regulatory relief to our state's dairy farmers, many of whom are still recovering from disastrous market conditions in 2009. Without assistance, too many New York milk producers will remain unable or unwilling to expand their businesses despite the game-changing opportunity for economic development made possible by the booming Greek yogurt industry. I request that your administration raise the threshold for CAFO regulations to 300 cows and that you couple eased regulatory burdens with additional environmental education, technical assistance, and conservation incentives for dairy farmers.

As you know, yogurt plants under construction in Batavia and throughout New York will require a significant and reliable supply of milk, and our dairy farmers will need to increase their production by as much as fifteen percent in order to meet projected demand. Despite this major incentive for expanding their operations, some medium-sized milk producers are reluctant to grow their herds for fear of the CAFO designation and extensive regulatory compliance costs that come with the acquisition of a 200th dairy cow in New York State. This 200 cow threshold puts New York dairy producers at a distinct competitive disadvantage with their counterparts in other states, where additional regulations only apply to herds of 300 or more. Again, to ensure that New York dairy products are always made with New York milk, I request that your administration raise the threshold for CAFO regulations to 300 cows.

We New Yorkers are proud of our strong tradition of protecting the land and water, and our farmers are deeply committed to safeguarding these vital resources on which the health of our families, economy, and communities depend. To fully leverage this commitment, I also ask that you couple eased regulatory burdens with additional environmental education, technical assistance, and conservation incentives for dairy farmers. I strongly believe that this collaborative approach will produce the greatest results for both the natural environment and all New Yorkers.

None of us wants New York yogurt to be made from milk produced across state lines. Our dairy farmers need a level playing field and supportive regulatory regime to fully capitalize on the Greek yogurt boom, and I look forward to working with you to ensure they have both.

Sincerely,



Kathleen C. Hochul
Member of Congress