



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
Committee on Agriculture

COMMITTEES
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry
Higher Education
Rules
Transportation

DONNA A. LUPARDO
Member of Assembly
123rd District

August 17, 2023

Dear Senators and Members of the NY Congressional Delegation,

The undersigned are members of the NYS Assembly Committee on Agriculture. We are writing to ask for your advocacy to restore 2% and whole milk as options to be served in NY's public schools. Along with many of you, we are concerned about the impact the 2010 decision has had on New York's dairy industry, as well as the potential negative health impacts on children. We urge you to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the 2023 Farm Bill by including a measure that would give the power of choice back to schools.

With 18.5% of New Yorkers under the age of 18 living below the poverty line, many rely on meals served at school to meet their dietary needs (Comptroller DiNapoli, 2022). Containing no more than 3.5% fat, whole milk contains Omega-3 fatty acids known for improving heart and brain health, making it an excellent source of nutrition. In fact, the benefits of whole milk well exceed those of fat free and low-fat milk. A 2019 study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that higher cow-milk fat intake was associated with lower amounts of excess body fat in children.

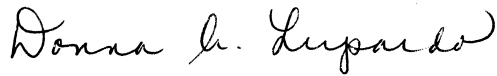
Unfortunately, the 2010 decision to remove whole and 2% milk from the National School Lunch Program, as part of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, was based on outdated information that does not take into account the health advantages provided by higher-fat milk. Consequentially, this has prevented students from reaping the maximum benefit from school-based meals. In cases where sugary drinks with no nutritional value remain available, these negative effects have been amplified.

In addition to the many health benefits of whole and 2% milk, support for our dairy industry is also very important. According to a 2020 Annual Summary issued by Commissioner Richard Ball, New York is home to nearly 3,600 dairy farms that produce over 15 billion pounds of milk every year, bringing in nearly half of our state's agricultural receipts annually. However, despite this success, farmers and producers continue to face a number of challenges, including low milk prices. Giving schools the choice to allow whole and 2% in schools again would restore an important market for our dairy farmers and producers, the overwhelming majority of whom are family-owned.

Keeping in mind that New York is the nation's fourth largest dairy state, the 2023 Farm Bill provides an important opportunity for you to correct a policy that has been detrimental to school children and dairies alike.

On behalf of the NYS Assembly Agriculture Committee and the many dairy farmers we represent, we respectfully ask that you include a provision in the upcoming Farm Bill to allow whole and 2% milk back into schools.

Sincerely,



Assemblywoman Donna A. Lupardo
Chair, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblyman Christopher Tague
Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Didi Barrett
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblyman Christopher Friend
Member, Committee on Agriculture



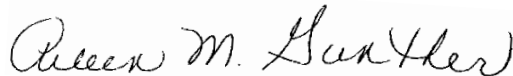
Assemblyman Brian Cunningham
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick
Member, Committee on Agriculture



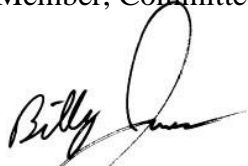
Assemblywoman Catalina Cruz
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther
Member, Committee on Agriculture



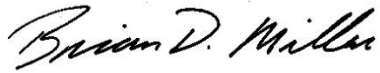
Assemblyman Steve Hawley
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblyman Billy Jones
Member, Committee on Agriculture



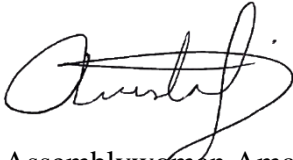
Assemblyman John Lemondes
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblyman Brian Miller
Member, Committee on Agriculture



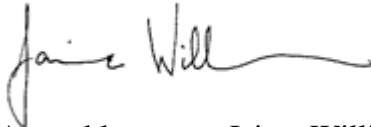
Assemblywoman Steven Raga
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Amanda Septimo
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblyman Al Stirpe
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Jaime Williams
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner
Member, Committee on Agriculture



Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman
Member, Committee on Agriculture