STATE OF NEW YORK

7841

IN SENATE

March 1, 2018

Introduced by Sen. RITCHIE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Agriculture

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law and the public lands law, in relation to access to viable agricultural land for new and beginning farmers

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Section 16 of the agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new subdivision 2-f to read as follows:

2-f. Aid in efforts supporting the successful transfer or lease of viable agricultural land from existing owners to new owners and operators, especially beginning farmers.

§ 2. Subdivision 5 of section 309 of the agriculture and markets law, as added by chapter 79 of the laws of 1980, is amended to read as follows:

5. The advisory council on agriculture shall advise the commissioner and other state agency heads on state government plans, policies and programs affecting farming and the agricultural industry of this state **including, but not limited to, advice regarding tax, financial assistance and other policies and programs that could address the needs of beginning farmers and issues related to the transfer or lease of ownership of farms**. Concerned state agencies shall be encouraged to establish a working relationship with the council and shall fully cooperate with the council in any requests it shall make.

§ 3. Subdivision 6 of section 323 of the agriculture and markets law, as amended by chapter 150 of the laws of 2013, is amended to read as follows:

6. reporting biennially to the governor and the legislature regarding the activities of the commissioner**, including efforts to enhance access to viable agricultural land for new and beginning farmers**, the types of technical assistance rendered to county agricultural and farmland protection boards, municipalities, soil and water conservation districts and not-for-profit conservation organizations, and the need to protect the state's agricultural economy and land resources.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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§ 4. The agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new section 329-a to read as follows:

§ 329-a. Farmland availability information. 1. The department shall collect and compile information about public land that is viable for farming and is available for purchase or lease for farming and make available such information, including contact information for the office of general services, other state agencies, municipalities, and other governmental entities offering such land, on its internet website. The department shall provide guidance and assistance to the office of general services, other state agencies, municipalities and other governmental organizations that request such assistance, in identifying land that is viable for farming.

2. The department shall make available similar information about private land available for purchase or lease for farming, including contact information for the owners of such land.

§ 5. Section 2 of the public lands law is amended by adding a new subdivision 3-a to read as follows:

3-a. Land viable for farming; identification. The commissioner of general services is authorized and directed to consult, as part of the state-owned real property management program, with the department of agriculture and markets to identify land that may be viable for farming and be made available for purchase or lease for farming and make such information available to the department of agriculture and markets to be disseminated to the public.

§ 6. This act shall take effect immediately.