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**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF
S.7861-A (May)/A.9336-A Barrett
In Relation to directing the Department of Agriculture and Markets to
develop guidance on the use of agrivoltaics**

March 2022

The Alliance for Clean Energy New York (ACE NY) supports S.7861/A.9336-A and urges its immediate passage. This bill would require the Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM) to develop guidance and educational materials for farmers on the use of agrivoltaics.

Agrivoltaics is the combined use and co-location of solar electric installations and agricultural activities, allowing farmers to harvest the power of the sun twice. Solar panels are positioned to provide the for crop production and potentially reduce water use as plants receive the shading they need. In addition to these crops, farmers receive payments from solar companies for hosting the solar projects, providing them with a constant revenue stream.

New York State farmers are facing rising production costs and reduced commodity prices. Leases from renewable energy projects offer farmers vital and consistent secondary income, helping to keep farming operations viable and allowing farmers to retain their farms. In addition, distributed solar projects can also meet some of the on-site electric demand associated with water pumping and irrigation systems as well as refrigeration systems for milk cooling. Solar projects can also be designed as a form of medium-term conservation with strategies to improve soil health, protect pollinators and other species, and reduce runoff and erosion, which are all essential for the continued production of food.

As climate change intensifies, temperatures will rise and rainfall will become more erratic with periods of drought. Agrivoltaics offers shade to row crops to reduce evaporation during hot and dry periods. The panels can also create a microclimate offering fewer fluctuations in temperature between the day and night.

This bill requires DAM to provide educational materials to farmers through the network of county cooperative extension programs, and soil and water conservation districts. These organizations are perfectly placed to disseminate this information given their current role in supporting the agricultural community. In the face of market volatility and continued economic disruptions, this bill will provide farmers with the education needed to make informed decisions about their farming operations. Furthermore, given that New York needs to dramatically increase solar power generation to meet our climate goals, agrivoltaics can achieve two public policy goals.

For the above reasons, the Alliance for Clean Energy New York supports this legislation. For more information contact Deb Peck Kelleher, Director of Policy Analysis & Operations, at (c) 518-698-3211. All of ACE NY's memos on legislation are available at <https://www.aceny.org/legislative-actions>.