



# SUPPORT

## A. 7703-A/S. 6039-A (Thiele/LaValle)

*AN ACT to provide that interests or rights acquired in real property for the preservation of agricultural lands in the county of Suffolk shall permit the use of such real property for a farm operation*

The New York League of Conservation Voters supports A. 7703-A/S. 6039-A (Thiele/LaValle), which would clarify that in Suffolk County agricultural land acquired for preservation under section 247 of the General Municipal Law (GML) may be used for a farm operation.

Section 247 of the GML permits local governments to purchase the development rights to open space and agricultural land, paying the difference in price between a land's value as is and its value if developed to its most profitable end as a residential or commercial development. The land is then permanently maintained, in private hands, as open space or agricultural land. Recent litigation in Suffolk County has revealed disagreements over the definition of "agricultural land," with some interpretations of section 247 effectively barring modern agricultural practices. This interpretation would both drive small farms out business and reduce future participation in Section 247 acquisitions by farmers who feared for their livelihoods.

A. 7703-A/S. 6039-A would clarify that agricultural land that has had its development rights purchased under section 247 in Suffolk County shall permit farm operations as defined by section 301 of the Agriculture and Markets Law. This bill would ensure that thousands of acres of farmland are both protected from development and able to remain in operation as active farms, while still permitting municipalities within Suffolk County to regulate new farm operation uses and buildings on agricultural land preserved under section 247.

For these reasons, the New York League of Conservation Voters urges passage of A. 7703-A/S. 6039-A.

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