

**Adopting The Ulster County Agricultural And Farmland Protection Plan And Submission Thereof To The New York State Commissioner Of Agriculture And Markets For Approval – Department Of Planning**

Referred to: The Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture Committee (Chairwoman Sperry and Legislators Clinton, Corcoran, Hewitt, Litts, Stewart and Walls)

Chairwoman of the Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture Committee, Megan Sperry, and Deputy Chair Herbert Litts, III offer the following:

WHEREAS, Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25-AAA, Section 324 authorizes the New York State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets to maintain a state agricultural and farmland protection program to provide financial and technical assistance within funds available, to assist counties and municipalities in developing agricultural and farmland protection plans and to assist both in the implementation of such plans; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of these programs is to fund local initiatives that are intended to maintain the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry and its supporting land base and to protect the environmental and landscape preservation values associated with agriculture; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is a substantial part of Ulster County's economy and contributes to the State's agricultural industry and supporting land base; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County was awarded funding in July 2022 to update its Agricultural and Farmland Protection by the New York State Department of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Planning Department working with its consultant, the assistance of a Project Advisory Committee, and input received from multiple stakeholder sessions, a public survey, and a public information meeting all of which contributed to the contents of the draft final plan which was provided to the Ulster County Farmland Protection Board for consideration; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Farmland Protection Board met on January 6, 2024, to review the Plan and voted in the majority to support the Plan and to pass the Plan on to the Ulster County Legislature for their consideration; and

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WHEREAS, pursuant to New York State Agriculture and Markets Law Section 324, the Ulster County Legislature conducted a public hearing on March 18, 2025 for public input regarding the final version of the Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan; and

WHEREAS, the State of New York has enacted the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and Part 617 of Title 7, New York Code, Rules and Regulations (6 NYCRR) to incorporate consideration of environmental factors into existing planning, review and decision-making processes of local governmental agencies; the Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan is subject to SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature pursuant to Resolution No.125 of March 2025 declared its intent to serve as lead agency in accordance with 6 NYCRR Part 617.6(b) (3) of the Regulations pertaining to Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law of New York State (SEQRA), for the above-referenced project; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature circulated its Notice of Intent to serve as Lead Agency, together with the EAF and accompanying documentation to all involved and interested agencies pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.6(b) (2) (i) and 6 NYCRR Part 617.6(b) (3); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.6(b) (3), at the conclusion of an unchallenged thirty (30) day period following the date of transmittal of the Notice of Intent, the EAF and documentation aforesaid to the interested agencies, the Legislature became the Lead Agency under SEQRA for this project; and

WHEREAS, New York State Agriculture and Markets Law Section 324 requires submission of the Plan to the New York State Commissioner of Agriculture; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature finds, after review of the Plan, the activities and actions associated with it, and the review of the Full Environmental Assessment Form, prepared in accordance with the requirements of SEQRA that no significant environmental impact will occur by adoption of the Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and a Negative Declaration is adopted and issued; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature approves the Plan; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Clerk of the Legislature shall submit the Plan along with the SEQRA Negative Declaration to the New York State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets for approval,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture on \_\_\_\_\_.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE