

Amending The 2022 Budget To Establish And Fund The Ulster County Agricultural Crisis Relief Program - Department Of Finance, Division Of Recovery And Resilience

Referred to: The American Rescue Plan Act Special Committee (Chairman Criswell and Legislators Corcoran, Levine, Lopez, and Sperry), The Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture Committee (Chairman Cahill and Legislators Corcoran, Criswell, Hewitt, Litts, Maloney and Sperry), and The Ways and Means Committee (Chairman Gavaris and Legislators Cahill, Fabiano, Ronk, and Walter)

Legislators Kathy Nolan and Herbert Litts, III offer the following:

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Treasury has adopted a Final Rule for use of funds provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that supports using ARPA funding to address economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and to lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2017 Census for Agriculture conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture, approximately 75% of farms and farmers in Ulster County fulfill criteria to be considered small businesses or low- and moderate income workers; and

WHEREAS, the agricultural community in Ulster County has experienced severe economic hardships due to the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, there exists an agricultural crisis in Ulster County, the Hudson Valley, and beyond that threatens to cause the loss of farms with soils of statewide significance, loss of jobs, decreased food production, and diminished soil health; and

WHEREAS, it is the intention of this resolution to provide funding to income eligible farmers in Ulster County and to establish a program to protect farmlands, in order to keep agricultural lands in production, retain jobs in the agricultural sector, promote soil health, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane, and enhance flood resilience; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of Ulster County to use funding from the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to provide assistance to eligible farm operations, establish a county wide fund to assist conservation organizations to permanently conserve farmland; to promote activities related to improved soil health and climate resiliency; and to broadly address the impacts of the pandemic and ensure an equitable recovery; and

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WHEREAS, regulations implemented by the United State Treasury Department in their published Final Rule (31 CRF Part 35, RIN 1505-AC77) includes ‘households’ as a named beneficiary of SLFRF funds (See pages 19 - 20 of the Final Rule); and low- or moderate-income households are considered impacted by the Pandemic and presumed eligible for responsive programs or services funded by the SLFRF (See Pages 29 and 30 of the Final Rule); and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of Ulster County to use ARPA SLFRF funds for providing assistance to income eligible farmers while also offering funding and establishing a program to protect farmlands and to promote activities related to improved soil health and climate resiliency; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County will work in coordination with the Ulster County Planning Department, the Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District, and others in establishing and implementing this program; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the 2022 Ulster County Budget is amended as follows:

	<u>INCREASE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
AA.1310.1079-4300.4505 (App. #)	Professional Services Other Fees	\$2,000,000.00
AA.1310.1079-3400.4095 (Rev. #),	Federal Aid, ARPA	\$2,000,000.00

and move its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

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Postponed in Committee: Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture on August 2, 2022

No Action Taken in Committee: American Rescue Plan Act on August 10, 2022

Postponed in Committee: Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture on August 2, 2022

Passed Committee: American Rescue Plan Act on _____.

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

Passed Committee: Ways and Means on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

\$2,000,000.00 – 2022 COUNTY APPROPRIATIONS

\$2,000,000.00 – 2022 FEDERAL REVENUE DOLLARS