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GOVERNOR APPOINTS MEMBERS TO STATE FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Governor Eliot Spitzer today announced the members of the New York State Council on Food Policy, which he established earlier this year. Members of the Council will work to establish new food policies for the state that will help ensure the availability of safe, fresh, nutritious and affordable food for all New Yorkers, especially low income individuals, senior citizens and children.

The Council will make recommendations to the Governor on state regulations, legislation and budget proposals in the area of food policy to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive inter-agency approach to state food policy issues. It is also tasked with identifying ways to increase the sale of New York agricultural products, with an emphasis on expanding the consumer market for locally-grown and organically-grown food. The Council will deliver a written annual report to the Governor.

"This Council will help the state coordinate its food-related policies and promote healthier communities," said Governor Spitzer. "The members of this Council will bring new and diverse expertise to this important policy area and I thank them for agreeing to serve."

The New York State Council on Food Policy includes representatives from all areas of the food system and will be chaired by New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker. Members include:

Linda Bopp, Executive Director of the Nutrition Consortium of New York State
Bruce Both, President of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union; Local 1500
Michael Burgess, Director of the Office for the Aging
Dr. Richard Daines, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health
Raymond Denniston, Food Service Director of the Johnson City Central School District and Co-Chair of the New York State Farm to School Coordinating Committee
Diane Eggert, Executive Director of the Farmers Market Federation of New York
John Evers, Executive Director of the Food Bank Association of New York State
Daniel Gundersen, Upstate Chair of Empire State Development Corporation
David Hansell, Commissioner of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Dr. Susan Henry, Dean of Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Richard Mills, Commissioner of the State Education Department
Cathryn Mizbani, Senior Extension Administrator and WIC Program Coordinator of the Cornell University Cooperative Extension of Schenectady County
William Rapfogel, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Jewish Poverty
Irwin Simon, Founder, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hain Celestial

Group, Inc.

Julie Suarez, Director of Public Policy for the New York Farm Bureau

Mary Warr Cowans, RD, CDN, and Associate Director of the Division of Nutrition at the New York State Department of Health

Eleanor Wilson, RD, Corporate Dietician for Price Chopper Supermarkets, Inc.

Catharine Young, New York State Senator

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker said, "The food industry is quite complex, and I am honored to lead this group of professionally diverse leaders and experts in the arena of food and agriculture. The experience and insightfulness of those on this Council make me confident that we will be effective in finding new and creative ways to improve our food systems for the benefit of all New Yorkers."

The Council will hold its first meeting next month in Albany.

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