

The Honorable Senator Leonard Lance  
119 Main Street  
Flemington, New Jersey 08822

Dear Senator Lance,

I am writing you to express my concerns regarding the Governor's proposal to eliminate of the Department of Agriculture. This proposal is completely unacceptable!

The elimination of agriculture as a cabinet-level department is a symbolic gesture of spending cuts only. After all of the department's vital services are redistributed to other state agencies, the savings will be minimal – maybe as little as \$500,000. Is such miniscule savings really worth undermining an industry that contributes billions to the state's economy?

The Department of Agriculture has a major impact on many aspects of our quality of life in New Jersey. It impacts farmland preservation, food quality and safety, Jersey Fresh marketing, animal and plant health, children's nutrition programs, and the agricultural education program.

In addition to the devastating effect this will have on agriculture, I worry that all of the department's remaining functions will suffer, impacting not just farmers, but all citizens of New Jersey. For example, right now, school nutrition programs, gypsy moth suppression, and farmland preservation are high priorities in the NJDA, and are administered by experienced experts. Will they receive the same kind of attention and priority in other departments?

I urge you to support a budget in which the cuts are spread fairly throughout all departments and their affected industries. Please keep the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the Secretary of Agriculture and the State Board of Agriculture intact.

Sincerely,