



## **DRBC testimony on June 5, 2024**

Hello, my name is Eugene Thalmann.

I am a farmer, a member of the Sullivan County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, the president of the Sullivan County Farmers Market Association, and an alternate for the Town of Liberty's Planning Board.

I am here today to remind the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) of the crucial role water plays in food production, the increasing challenges posed by climate change, and the necessity of prioritizing farmers' needs in the decision-making process.

Water is the lifeblood of agriculture. Without it, crops cannot grow, and livestock cannot thrive. As we face dramatic changes in weather patterns due to climate change, maintaining a stable water supply has become even more critical for the success of farming operations. Farmers depend on various water sources, such as rivers, lakes, and wells, all of which are deeply influenced by the surrounding landscape and development activities.

Overdevelopment poses a significant threat to these water sources. The drilling of new wells and the overuse of existing ones can lead to wells running dry, leaving farmers without the water they need. Moreover, urban sprawl and industrial expansion can contaminate water supplies and disrupt natural water cycles, exacerbating the already challenging conditions farmers face.

Understanding the hydrogeology of our area is essential to ensuring that as development continues, agricultural operations can still meet their water needs. We need comprehensive studies and informed planning to protect our water resources from the impacts of overdevelopment. Sustainable water management practices must be implemented to balance the needs of agriculture with those of growing communities and industries.

It is imperative that the DRBC recognizes the critical importance of water for farming and prioritizes the needs of farmers in its policies and decisions. By doing so, we can ensure that agricultural operations remain viable and that our food supply is secure. We must also protect our environment from the adverse effects of unchecked development, preserving the natural ecosystems that support both agriculture and biodiversity.

In conclusion, farmers are essential to our society, and their access to water is vital for food production. The challenges of climate change and overdevelopment demand that we take immediate action to manage our water resources sustainably. By prioritizing farmers' needs and protecting our environment, we can build a resilient agricultural sector and secure a sustainable future for all.

With Best of Health and Spirit,  
Eugene S. Thalmann, MS, CNS, CDN, Farmer  
Sprouting Dreams Farms LLC  
5474 State Route 55  
Liberty NY, 12754