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To: Press Office <Press.Office@suffolkcountyny.gov>

Subject: SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLONE ANNOUNCES NEW “CHOOSE LI – LOCAL AND INDEPENDENT” SIGNS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES



For Immediate Release

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Contact: County Executive Press Office

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SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLONE ANNOUNCES NEW “CHOOSE LI – LOCAL AND INDEPENDENT” SIGNS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

ChooseLI.org Website Encourages Residents to Support Local Food Businesses

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone today announced that through the Choose LI – Local and Independent initiative, local businesses can request a free ‘[Choose LI](http://ChooseLI.org)’ and/or ‘[Take the Pledge](http://ChooseLI.org)’ sign to display at their farm stand, farmers market, fish market, brewery, cidery, distillery or vineyard. The signs, printed on white corrugated plastic measuring either 18’ x 24’ or 30’ x 40’, can be requested online through the chooseli.org website. To date, more than 46 local businesses have signed up as Choose LI partners.

“Our local farmstands, fish markets, vineyards and breweries are the backbone of our community and we want residents to continue to take advantage of these locally grown and harvested products,” **said Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone**. “The new signs further the Choose LI mission, and I encourage our local business to request theirs today to continue spreading the word about all of our locally sourced goods.”

The ‘Choose LI – Local and Independent’ initiative asks local residents and visitors to choose goods from local and independent farmers and fishermen to preserve Long Island’s heritage industries and cultivate a vibrant, diverse and robust economy. Residents are encouraged to “Take the Pledge” and commit to spending 10 percent of their weekly food budget, approximately \$17.60, on local and independent food goods. Businesses can consider creating promotional specials using the #1760 and #ChooseLI hashtags to help pledgees meet their weekly commitments.

The website, which is a collaborative effort that seeks to raise awareness, advocate and inspire the community to support local and independent businesses on Long Island, includes a searchable and interactive map of all the farmstands, farmers' markets, fish markets, vineyards, breweries, cideries, and distilleries in Suffolk County

The searchable map currently lists 25 Farmers Markets, 115 Farmstands, 33 Breweries, 4 Distilleries, 2 Cideries, 33 Fish Markets, 51 Vineyards, 21 Restaurants selling local oysters and 49 Flower Retailers. Anyone who visits the website can interact with the map, finding the exact address, hours of operation, phone number, and website of the business they are looking for. If your business selling Long Island produce is missing from the Suffolk County map, please contact Choose LI at chooseli@suffolkcountyny.gov.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, New Yorkers spend approximately \$176 a week on food. An analysis done by Suffolk County's Department of Economic Development and Planning states that if just 10 percent of the over 450,000 household located in Suffolk County commits to spending 10 percent of their weekly food budget on local food and beverages over a typical harvest season for Suffolk County, that spending would add an estimated \$19 million into the Suffolk County economy. This \$19 million in direct spending would create \$33 million in total economic activity and create nearly 1,000 local jobs.

Suffolk County's rich agricultural and fishing heritage helps sustain the County's economic growth by generating tourism dollars, supporting local restaurants and service industries, and providing fresh produce for residents. According to the latest US Census of Agriculture, Suffolk County has 30,000 acres of farmland and 20,000 of those acres are permanently preserved through County, Town, and private land preservation programs. Suffolk County is home to 560 farms, which employ more 4,600 people. The County's fisheries contribute to Long Island's \$5.9 billion tourism industry with ocean-related businesses generating over \$2.1 billion in goods and services for the County and employing over 35,000 people. Approximately 488 Suffolk County commercial fishing establishments landed over 18 million pounds of fish, worth \$25 million at the dock, generating an additional \$41 million in economic activity and creating 528 additional jobs.

For more information on Choose LI, visit ChooseLI.org or on social media at [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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