



# SIERRA CLUB

## ATLANTIC CHAPTER

Nov 24, 2019

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Executive Chamber  
Capitol Building  
Albany, N.Y. 12224

RE: A.4072-A (Gottfried)/S.1471-A (Hoylman),  
Ensuring Hospitals Provide Plant-Based Meals Option

Dear Governor Cuomo,

On behalf of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, New York's largest volunteer-led environmental organization of 50,000 members statewide, I urge you to sign into law A.4072-A /S.1471-A , a bill that would amend the public health law to require hospitals, which provide inpatient or residential care, offer plant-based meal and snack options upon request from a patient or the patient's lawful representative. The legislation specifies that the food or beverage offered shall have nutritional value comparable to the non-plant-based option that it replaces. Plant-based foods are defined as those free from meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, eggs, honey and any derivative thereof.

An increasing number of New Yorkers are consciously reducing or removing animal products from their diets for reasons relating to their health, their personal ethics or efforts to reduce their carbon footprint. Nutritional guidelines have increasingly emphasized the health benefits of consuming vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and beans, and nuts and seeds. Doctors often suggest diets emphasizing plant-based food for treating conditions such as heart disease, obesity and diabetes. In fact, the American Medical Association has called upon hospitals to provide a greater variety of healthy food, including plant-based options and alternatives.

Patients being treated for illness or trauma in a hospital are especially in need of the most nutritious food possible and because hospital patients are largely immobile and have limited access to food options, they must rely on the hospital to offer healthy food choices. If vegetarian or vegan New Yorkers are not given plant -based alternatives, they clearly face a nutritional obstacle to their recovery. This bill does not apply to nutritional support products ordered by a health care professional and allows the health care provider to advise the patient whether a "medically suitable plant-based food option is reasonably available."

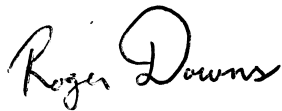
This legislation does not preclude hospitals from offering plant-based food options to all patients nor does it keep a patient who has requested a plant-based food option from selecting other options. The bill will simply make sure that patients who rely on hospitals or residential health care settings for meals and snacks will have access to healthy plant-based food options, especially during illness or recovery from trauma.

Under your leadership, Governor Cuomo, NY has adopted the most aggressive greenhouse emissions reduction mandates in the country. But we will not meet our commitment of 85% reduction in GHGs by 2050 unless we make efforts to curtail the considerable emissions that emanate from meat and dairy production. Animal agriculture is responsible for at least 14% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, according to conservative estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Even simple legal gestures like requiring hospitals to accommodate those that responsibly choose not to eat meat can help foster some of the diet and habit change we will need New Yorkers to embrace to meet our climate goals.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter Urges You to sign A.4072-A/S.1471-A.

Thank you for all you do to protect New York's environment and communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Downs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roger Downs  
Conservation Director  
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter