
Amid Chinese Buying Spree, Steinhardt Bill Would Prohibit Foreign Ownership of New Jersey Farmland

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Senator Says Food Security Is National Security

Senator Doug Steinhardt has introduced legislation that would prohibit foreign ownership of New Jersey farmland amid rising concerns about a Chinese buying spree of American farms.



Sen. Doug Steinhardt has introduced legislation that would prohibit foreign ownership of New Jersey farmland amid rising concerns about a Chinese buying spree of American farmland. ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

"We need to pay attention to the fact that China and its proxies have been buying up farmland across the United States," said Steinhardt (R-23). "When you recognize that food security is national security, it quickly becomes clear that we need to prevent our agricultural lands in New Jersey from falling under the control of hostile foreign governments."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) highlighted last year how state-owned Chinese companies were spending billions to buy farmland and agricultural enterprises across the United States, including the purchase of the largest pork producer in the world, Virginia's Smithfield Foods.

In other states, including North Dakota and Texas, China has been purchasing farmland in [close proximity to sensitive U.S. military installations](#), raising spying concerns.

Steinhardt's new legislation, [S-3534](#), would prohibit any foreign government or foreign person from acquiring, purchasing, or otherwise obtaining an interest in any agricultural land in the State, with limited exceptions.

Further, the bill requires any foreign-owned farmland to be sold within five years of the bill's enactment to an individual, trust, corporation, partnership, or other business entity that is not a foreign government or foreign person, with a deed easement attached to the land requiring the land to remain devoted to agricultural use.

With tensions rising in the Pacific, Steinhardt warned that Chinese control of our food supply could be disastrous should a military conflict occur.

"We can't make the same mistake with our farms that we made with other industries like manufacturing that we handed over to China and other adversaries and competitors," added Steinhardt. "You can live without your iPhone if China shuts off the supply from its factories, but you can't live without the food that comes from our farms. It's that simple."

Steinhardt is also drafting legislation that would require the State Investment Council (SIC) to do an expedited review of its investments in Chinese companies. The SIC manages the investment of \$95 billion in assets for the public employee pension funds of hundreds of thousands of active and retired state and local government workers.