



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

State Legislature gives OK to legislation strengthening 'Emergency Services Revolving Loan Fund'

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 5, 2013

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Albany, N.Y., June 5—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) has voted in favor of legislation unanimously approved by the Senate late yesterday to strengthen a key New York State assistance program to help local volunteer fire departments and emergency squads – as well as cities, counties, towns and villages -- repair and purchase firefighting and rescue equipment, and meet other emergency services infrastructure needs.

The legislation (S.3728/A.5120) enjoys strong bipartisan support in the Legislature. It's also been approved by the Assembly and now goes to Governor Andrew Cuomo to be signed into law.

The program, known as the "Emergency Services Revolving Loan Fund," was first established in 1994 to provide fixed, low-interest loans to localities and local volunteer departments.

O'Mara said that the amounts of the loans the fund provides to meet a variety of emergency services purposes, from repairing ambulances to renovating fire houses, has not changed since 2004 or kept pace with the escalating costs of modern emergency services equipment and facilities.

"The fund is a cornerstone of the assistance New York State provides to local first responders. It's vital to the ability of our local fire departments to purchase and repair firefighting and rescue equipment, and meet other emergency services needs," said O'Mara, a member of the Legislature's joint, bipartisan Commission on Rural Resources. "But it's been nearly a decade since we've strengthened the fund's ability to keep pace with the ever-increasing costs of modern-day emergency services equipment and infrastructure."

Specifically the measure would provide the following increases in the amounts of loans available for:

- purchasing firefighting apparatus from \$225,000 to \$375,000, or from \$400,000 to \$550,000 if two or more departments file a joint application;
- purchasing ambulance or rescue vehicles from \$150,000 to \$225,000, or from \$265,000 to \$350,000 for a joint application;
- purchasing protective or communications equipment from \$100,000 to \$200,000, or from \$165,000 to \$265,000 for a joint application;
- repairing or rehabilitating firefighting apparatus, ambulances or rescue vehicles from \$75,000 to \$200,000, or from \$135,000 to \$400,000 for a joint application;
- purchasing accessory equipment from \$75,000 to \$125,000, or from \$135,000 to \$175,000 for a joint application;

-- renovating, rehabilitating or repairing facilities that house firefighting equipment, ambulances, rescue vehicles and related equipment from \$150,000 to \$250,000, or from \$265,000 to \$500,000 for a joint application;

-- constructing facilities that house firefighting equipment, ambulances, rescue vehicles and related equipment from \$300,000 to \$500,000, or from \$525,000 to \$750,000 for a joint application;

-- constructing facilities for live fire training from \$150,000 to \$250,000, or from \$265,000 to \$400,000 for a joint application.

"Volunteer fire departments and emergency squads have anchored so many of our communities for so long, and it's a smart investment to help them secure the equipment they need to protect our lives and property," said O'Mara. "It's vital to the safety and security of cities, towns and villages throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide."

O'Mara is a long-time advocate for first responders. He also sponsors the "[Emergency Services Volunteer Incentive Act](#)" (S.3297/A.4781) to help localities recruit and retain volunteer firefighters and other emergency services personnel.