



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## **O'Mara welcomes call to strengthen New York's Environmental Protection Fund ~ Additional funding also proposed for Water Infrastructure Improvement Act**

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**Albany, N.Y., January 5**—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,I,C-Big Flats), chairman of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, today signaled his support for Governor Andrew Cuomo’s proposal to fully fund New York’s Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in the 2016-2017 state budget.

The move to bolster the EPF has received increasing support over the past year from leading business, conservation and environmental groups across New York and O’Mara, in his first year as the chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee in 2015, and Senate Republicans have continually expressed a commitment to fully funding the EPF as quickly as possible. Last year’s state budget increased funding for the EPF to \$177 million.

Earlier today on Long Island, [the governor announced that he will include a proposal to fully fund the EPF at \\$300 million](#) when he unveils his 2016-2017 executive budget proposal on January 13th in Albany.

O’Mara released the following statement:

“I have said from the outset that I looked forward to joining the governor, my legislative colleagues and all of the advocates in this ongoing effort to fully restore the Environmental Protection Fund as quickly as we can. Senate Republicans have long supported a stronger EPF and, in fact, approved legislation last year to initiate full funding of it. The fund focuses on so many common problems and it speaks

directly to the common good. The EPF has been a key source of state aid assisting local communities in undertaking a range of projects from drinking water quality to wetlands protection, from community parks enhancement to recycling programs, and from farmland preservation to controlling invasive species. It supports critical environmental initiatives including clean air and water projects, and flood control and restoration.

“It helps create local jobs and studies have shown that for every dollar of EPF funds invested in land and water protection, the state and localities get back seven dollars in economic benefits. That's a pretty solid investment by any measure. The EPF enjoys an impressive record of government investment which has benefitted a broad-based segment of New York’s citizens and communities like very few government programs ever have.

“Strengthening the EPF to the fullest extent possible within the context of the entire state fiscal plan makes great economic and environmental sense. If we are ultimately successful in this effort, it will be an enduring and proud achievement for future generations of New Yorkers and New York communities.”

Read more from [The Business Council of the New York State](#), and read additional reaction [HERE](#).

The governor also today proposed increasing state funding by \$100 million for the "Water Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015," which O'Mara and his Senate colleagues fought hard for as a priority in the current state budget, and which has already benefitted several area municipalities (read more [here](#)).

O'Mara said, "I believe this is going to prove successful in helping localities undertake critical water infrastructure improvement projects, including sewer and pipeline repairs. I'm hopeful that it will represent a model for how the state-local partnership can be transformed and strengthened for the good of local environments, local economies and local property taxpayers."