



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senate advances O'Mara legislation creating paint recycling program to cut costly local burden

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 11, 2016

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Albany, N.Y., February 10—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), chairman of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said today that the committee has reported legislation he sponsors to establish an industry-sponsored “Paint Stewardship Program” to reduce a costly burden on local governments that are currently responsible for collecting and disposing of most post-consumer paint.

The legislation ([S4926/A6199](#)) will now go before the full Senate for a final vote. It was unanimously approved by the Senate last year, with strong bipartisan support, but was never acted on by the state Assembly. The measure is sponsored by Assemblyman Al Stirpe (D-Syracuse) and is currently in the Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee.

O'Mara called on the Assembly Democratic leadership to approve the important environmental legislation this year so it can be signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. He said that the legislation would create local jobs, provide relief to local property taxpayers, and encourage environmentally sound recycling and disposal of unused paint in New York State.

O'Mara pointed to the legislation as an example of how government and industry can work together to implement effective environmental policies and programs.

"This legislation exemplifies how much we can accomplish by working together with industry on important environmental concerns. Seeking common ground and cooperation, rather than government cramming unreasonable demands down the throat of industry, can help give New York State a more business-friendly environment and actually result in better, more workable laws," O'Mara said. "Working together will go a long ways on reaching an end result on other important issues that would benefit our state fiscally, economically and environmentally."

The national Product Stewardship Institute (www.productstewardship.us) estimates that approximately 3.9 million gallons of paint go unused each year in New York State -- with the costs of collecting and managing the paint's disposal mostly falling on local governments.

Under O'Mara's legislation, through which paint manufacturers would be responsible for managing the recycling and disposal of unused paint, local governments would save

approximately \$25 million annually.

The measure has drawn the support of a range of environmental advocacy organizations, paint industry representatives, and municipal agencies, including the: Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency; Madison County Department of Solid Waste & Sanitation; American Coatings Association; **New York Product Stewardship Council**; Citizens Campaign for the Environment; and the National Resources Defense Council.

The legislation was also cited last session as a priority bill by the joint, bipartisan New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators.

In addition to reduced costs on local taxpayers, O'Mara said, a Paint Stewardship Program will create convenient recycling opportunities and green sector jobs, reduce disposal in favor of recycling, and result in less waste as consumers will become smarter and more efficient shoppers for paint.

The legislation directs the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to develop a plan for paint manufacturers and sellers to form and cover the costs of a statewide, not-for-profit Paint Stewardship Program that will minimize the involvement of local governments in the management of post-consumer paint by reducing its generation and establishing agreements to collect, transport, reuse, recycle, and properly dispose of post-consumer paint at appropriately licensed collection sites and facilities using environmentally sound management practices. The measure further specifies that the plan include details on annual program audits and reports, education and outreach to consumers, and how the post-consumer paint will be collected, treated, stored, transported and disposed.

States that have implemented comparable programs are showing impressive results. Oregon has collected and recycled over 1,000,000 gallons of paint since its program was implemented in

July 2010. California launched its program in 2012 and has over 350 new collection locations accepting paint for recycling.