



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara sponsoring legislation to expand workforce tax credit for farmers; NY Farm Bureau identifies action as a top priority in 2017

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 26, 2017

| ISSUE: **FAMILY FARMS**

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Albany, N.Y., January 26—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today announced that he is co-sponsoring legislation substantially increasing the state’s current Farm Workforce Retention Credit.

The **New York Farm Bureau this week** identified the legislation (**S2905**) as a top priority in 2017, noting that the latest figures from the National Agricultural Statistics Service show the value of farm production in New York dropped from \$6.33 billion in 2014 to \$5.33 billion in 2015.

Farm Bureau President David Fisher said, "The 16% drop in farm income highlights why it is imperative that New York Farm Bureau advocate for common sense laws, regulations, and tax policies that support the state's family farms."

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "Various studies continue to recognize New York as the state with the highest tax burden in the nation. It remains an unfair and unreasonable burden on farmers as well as individual taxpayers, families, employers and workers. Even with the tax relief we successfully achieved as part of the current state budget, we have to keep taking actions like this one for family farmers continuing to struggle with high costs and an overall tough economy."

O'Mara was very outspoken with his concerns over last year's enactment of an across-the-board higher, statewide minimum wage as part of the 2016-17 state budget. He continually pointed to the negative and potentially devastating impact the higher wage will have on New York State farms, small businesses, school districts, not-for-profits, human services providers and others.

The legislation O'Mara co-sponsors would significantly increase the Farm Workforce Retention Credit approved as part of the 2016-17 state budget that allows eligible farm employers to claim a refundable tax credit for each farm employee that is employed for 500 or more hours each year. Under the legislation, the phased-in tax credit would be doubled to \$500 per eligible farm employee in 2017; \$600 in 2018; \$800 in 2019; \$1,000 in 2020; and \$1,200 in 2021.

The Senate approved the legislation last year but the Assembly did not act on it.