



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Legislation approved to help expand industrial hemp industry regionally, statewide: O'Mara and Southern Tier Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo have sponsored laws encouraging the industry's growth

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 21, 2017

| ISSUE: **INDUSTRIAL HEMP AGRICULTURE MANUFACTURING**



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Albany, N.Y., June 21—The New York State Senate tonight gave final legislative approval to legislation sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to treat industrial hemp like other agricultural products in New York State.

Since 2014, O'Mara has worked with Southern Tier Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell) and the Cuomo administration to enact new laws that have jump-started the industry's growth in New York State and are helping secure an economic foothold for state farmers in the nation's burgeoning industrial hemp industry.

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "These new laws have continued to strengthen the foundation we've built over the past several years to place New York State at the forefront of a new, potentially billion-dollar industry. It will help diversify our agricultural economy, generate revenue and create jobs. We're moving forward to ensure that the development and growth of the industrial hemp industry will provide valuable new economic opportunities and a competitive edge for farmers and agribusinesses, generate revenue and create jobs. This legislation continues the effort in very important ways."

The Assembly approved the legislation ([S.6787/A.8509](#)) earlier today. It was introduced at the request of Governor Andrew Cuomo and will now go to the governor to be signed into law. It would:

- > ensure that the state recognizes industrial hemp as an agricultural product;
- > establish quality standards for industrial hemp seed developed in New York and support the additional study of industrial hemp and hemp-derived products;
- > authorize the state agriculture commissioner to collect industrial hemp data and utilize it to promote best farming practices;

- > require the state to establish a toll-free hotline to provide growers and license seekers with access to information and technical assistance; and
- > establish an industrial hemp working group, composed of researchers and industry leaders, to examine and develop policy initiatives, and promotion and marketing opportunities.

The move follows action earlier this year in the **2017-2018 state budget that lifted the cap** on the number of state farms allowed to receive licenses to grow and manufacture industrial hemp. Previous law capped the number of allowable farms at 10. Current license holders include Cornell University and Binghamton University.

Cornell University also hosted the state's first "Industrial Hemp Summit" in late April.

Last June, both houses of the Legislature approved a new law (**Chapter 256 of the Laws of 2016**) O'Mara and Lupardo sponsored allowing the transportation, processing, sale, and distribution of hemp grown as part of the New York's research pilot program. It also authorized universities and partner farmers to study and establish business and economic opportunities that will lay the groundwork for a fully-fledged agricultural industry once the crop is fully legalized by the federal government.

Both the stalk and seed from hemp can be used in the production of a variety of goods including textiles, building materials, paper, food and environmental products such as biofuels. It is a source of cannabidiol, a chemical compound used in medical marijuana applications, and is rich in Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids, which gives it numerous health benefits to both humans and animals. According to a 2015 report, retail sales from imported hemp products were estimated at \$600 million in the United States.