



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

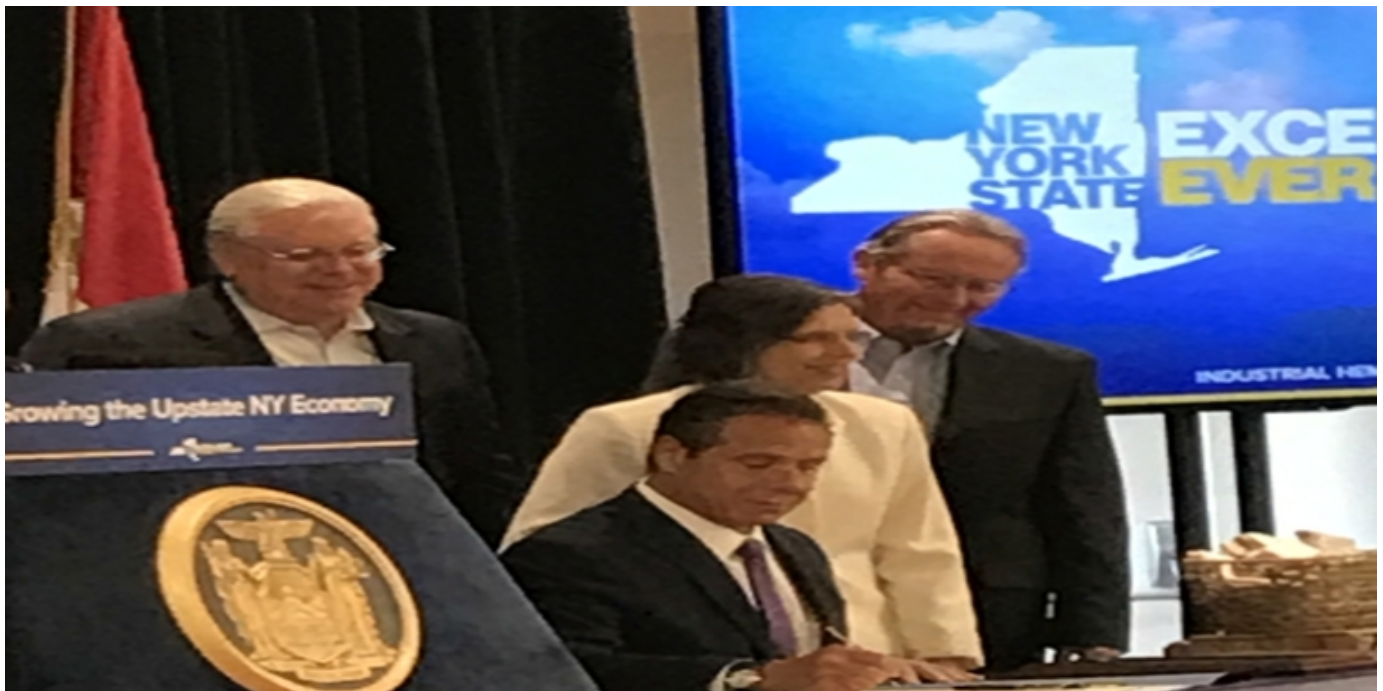
New law, state investment will help expand industrial hemp production regionally, statewide: O'Mara has joined Governor Cuomo, Southern Tier Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo to sponsor laws encouraging the industry's growth (UPDATED)

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Ithaca, N.Y., July 12—Governor Andrew Cuomo today signed into law legislation sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell) to treat industrial hemp like other agricultural products in New York State.

Cuomo also appointed O'Mara and Lupardo to the state's newly created Industrial Hemp Working Group.

[Today's official bill-signing ceremony at Cornell University](#), which hosted New York's first "Industrial Hemp Summit" in late April, also included the announcement of a series of new funding initiatives to support the industry's growth.

Since 2014, O'Mara and Lupardo have worked with 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 and investments 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. They 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 law continues the effort in very important ways.”

The Legislature approved the legislation ([S.6787/A.8509](#)) in late June. It will:

- > 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.

At today’s announcement, Cuomo announced the members of the working group that includes O’Mara and Lupardo together with state agency officials and representatives of the hemp industry, agriculture, and higher education.

The state also today unveiled the “One-Stop Shop” toll-free hotline and webpage (<https://esd.ny.gov/industrial-hemp>) the new law creates to assist producers and processors. Modeled after a similar initiative to support the craft beverage industry, the One-Stop Shop provides a single point of government contact for assistance with the state’s newly launched grant programs, as well as regulations, permitting, and any other questions or issues facing the industry. New York producers and businesses interested in the Industrial Hemp Research trial with Cornell University or the Industrial Hemp Processors Grant Fund should visit the One-Stop Shop, email IndustrialHempNYS@agriculture.ny.gov, or call toll-free at 877-249-6841.

New York is also undertaking a \$5-million research and development effort

comprised of research grants for research institutions and farmers, an industrial hemp seed-breeding program, and capital grants for industrial hemp processors.

The research grant program is already assisting the planting of industrial hemp on nearly 2,000 acres across the state for research purposes, expanding industrial hemp production in New York nearly 6,000% from 30 acres in 2016.

All of the moves follow 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.

Last year, Cuomo 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 continues to lay the groundwork for a fully-fledged agricultural industry.

[According to Cornell University](#), industrial hemp is a valuable commodity crop. Clothing, consumer products like soap, insulation, and more can be made from the plant's stalks and seeds. Hemp stalk and seed is also used to produce a variety of other goods including textiles, building materials, paper, food and environmental products such as biofuels, as well as being utilized for fiber, hempseed oil, and seed production. It is also 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. Hemp products generated nearly \$600 million in U.S. sales in 2015.

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