



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senate committee advances O'Mara's 'Solar Panel Collection Act': O'Mara says action offers a commonsense approach to waste management

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 11, 2018

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As New York State continues to aggressively move forward on developing and utilizing renewable energy, and we should, it's important to cover all the bases. This includes staying ahead of the potential need to collect and properly dispose of or recycle out-of-service solar panels.

Albany, N.Y., January 11—Legislation sponsored by State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to enact the "Solar Panel Collection Act" and establish a solar panel recycling and

disposal program in New York State was reported out of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee this week and now goes before the full Senate for a vote.

The legislation (**S2837**) would require the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), working with solar panel manufacturers, to develop a program for the collection, transportation, recycling, and disposal of out-of-service solar panels. Manufacturers would finance the program.

“As New York State continues to aggressively move forward on developing and utilizing renewable energy, and we should, it’s important to cover all the bases. This includes staying ahead of the potential need to collect and properly dispose of or recycle out-of-service solar panels. This legislation offers a commonsense, proactive, economically, and environmentally sound approach to managing photovoltaic waste and keeping it out of landfills,” said O’Mara, who chairs the Environmental Conservation Committee.

O’Mara noted that the state’s Clean Energy Standard establishes the goal of obtaining 50% of the state’s energy needs by 2030. Solar-generated electricity will be a cornerstone of meeting this goal.

One of the legislation’s supporters, the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV), states, “As solar has spread there has been little attention given to the proper disposal of solar panels.”

Supporters of the legislation caution that the immense growth of the solar energy industry in New York State and nationally could produce a significant amount of photovoltaic (PV) waste. Solar panels contain materials and rare metals valuable for reuse, and the proper and responsible recycling of the panels will help keep them out of landfills.

Most manufacturers offer a 20- or 25-year standard solar panel warranty.