



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Upstate localities, farmers put at risk under governor's proposed budget: O'Mara warns that Cuomo cuts leave ongoing state support up in the air

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 25, 2019

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**Albany, N.Y., January 25**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today warned that Governor Andrew Cuomo's 2019-2020 proposed state budget puts critical state funding for

area municipalities and area farmers at risk.

“Governor Cuomo’s proposed budget does not protect critical state funding for regional municipalities, as well as for specifically vital agricultural programs and services that have long made a difference for our farmers. Putting the fate of this funding and these successful programs in the hands of Democratic majorities in the Senate and Assembly spells trouble for upstate localities and upstate agriculture,” said O’Mara.

O’Mara called on the Legislature’s Democratic leaders in the Senate and Assembly to reject the following provisions of the Cuomo plan:

The elimination of Aid and Incentives to Municipalities (AIM) funding for most of the towns and villages across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide. AIM is the largest single source of state revenue sharing for these localities. It’s estimated that the Cuomo cut will result in the elimination of AIM for 1,328 of New York’s 1,465 towns and villages unless the Legislature restores it during final budget negotiations;

The elimination of approximately \$15 million for specific and long-standing agricultural programs and services.

Earlier this year, O’Mara urged Cuomo to protect funding for these key state agricultural programs and services but warned that the governor’s track record hasn’t been positive when it comes to agricultural funding in proposed state budgets in the past.

“In the past, when Republicans held the majority in the Senate, we rejected these cuts outright and successfully fought to restore them, year after year. I remain concerned about who will be in agriculture’s corner in the same way in 2019? Adding to the concern this year is the governor’s surprising elimination of revenue sharing for towns and villages. It’s unfortunate, to say the least, that Governor Cuomo decided to leave the future for this

funding up in the air,” said O’Mara.

In 2018, Senate Republicans fought to restore more than \$10 million in agricultural program funding cuts Cuomo proposed in the 2018-2019 state budget. From 2011 to last year, O’Mara said that the Senate GOP was responsible for budget restorations totaling more than \$50 million. Among other programs and institutions the governor’s 2019-20 proposed budget wipes out funding for are the Wine and Grape Foundation, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Tractor Rollover Prevention Program, FarmNet (Farm Family Assistance), Local Fair Assistance, and the Cornell Diagnostic Lab. Other vital Cornell research and study programs are also impacted including those invaluable to the dairy industry, food safety research and study, disease detection and prevention, honeybee die-off, invasive species, pesticide use, and rabies prevention and treatment.

O’Mara said, “Senate Republicans will continue to stand up and speak out for our towns and villages, and farmers and the entire agricultural industry. We will continue to oppose any state government actions that put them at risk. We will continue to wage the fight on their behalf. History warns, however, that some state Democratic leaders may not share the same level of commitment and that’s a major red flag at the start of 2019 state budget negotiations.”