



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara denounces Cuomo plan to restore state aid by shifting cost to counties: Calls it state government 'out of touch and out of control'

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 19, 2019

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Elmira, N.Y., February 18—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today denounced a move by Governor Andrew Cuomo to restore a proposed cut to critical state funding for area towns and villages by imposing yet another unfunded state mandate on counties.

O'Mara called the Cuomo cost shift the latest example of a state government that's "out of touch and out of control."

In his 2019-20 proposed Executive Budget released last month, Cuomo unexpectedly called for 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.

After O'Mara and many other state legislators joined town supervisors, village mayors and other local leaders to oppose the Cuomo cut, the governor reversed course late last Friday.

However, Cuomo amended his original budget plan to restore the AIM cut by shifting the cost responsibility from the state to counties.

Specifically, the governor now wants counties to pick up the cost of AIM for towns and villages and pay for it with new revenue from his proposed internet sales tax.

O'Mara and local officials are denouncing Cuomo's new plan as yet another move by the state to shift costs from the state to counties and local property taxpayers.

O'Mara said, "Here's what Governor Cuomo calls a plan: another new tax and another unfunded state mandate dumped on top of what's already one of the biggest piles of taxes and unfunded mandates in America. This is state government out of touch and out of control. Governor Cuomo once again ignores the burden already facing upstate local property taxpayers and shirks another state responsibility."

Hornell Mayor John Buckley said, "The Governor's proposed restoration of AIM funding is all smoke and mirrors. This proposal simply shifts the cost from the State down to the Counties. While the Governor focuses on free college tuition for undocumented residents, pay increases for prison inmates and abortion up to the moment of birth, he is hanging municipalities out to dry. If he is brazen enough to strip AIM from towns and villages, it's only a matter of time before he targets cities."

Stephen J. Acquario, Executive Director of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), said, "This is a horrible precedent and unnecessarily shifts the state's burden to local taxpayers who already pay some of the highest taxes in the nation. The state could have used its share of Internet sales tax revenue to make municipalities whole. Forcing counties to use a portion of their Internet sales tax revenue to reimburse our municipal partners does not help the state reduce property taxes or help to offset the costs of services

to our residents. In the end, local homeowners and businesses just keep paying more for decisions made by the State."

Peter Baynes, Executive Director of the New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials (NYCOM), said, "While we appreciate the fact that the Governor has acknowledged that the elimination of AIM funding would have serious implications for the State's villages and towns, his "restoration" of this \$59 million is in reality a robbing of one property taxpayer to pay another. Rather than playing this shell game, New York State should be fulfilling its obligation to increase its investment in municipal aid and the property tax relief it will generate. Imposing a new mandate on counties to make up for the state's cut to villages and towns will only further harm New York's already overburdened taxpayers."

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