



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Regional lawmakers urge Cuomo administration to exempt workers from Pennsylvania: Warn travel advisory quarantine could hit local Southern Tier economies hard

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 4, 2020

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While we understand the need for caution behind the advisory and its accompanying quarantine requirement, we also strongly urge you to take into full consideration the potentially severe economic consequences for regions like ours that border another state, in this case Pennsylvania, where there is a daily influx of out-of-state workers essential to our local economies.

Elmira, N.Y., August 4—A group of Southern Tier and Western New York lawmakers are urging Governor Andrew Cuomo to provide an exemption for workers who live in

Pennsylvania but work in New York from potentially being included in the governor's COVID-19 travel advisory that now covers more than 30 states.

Cuomo's travel advisory applies to any person traveling to New York from states with a significant community spread of COVID-19 and requires them to quarantine for 14 days.

The state lawmakers -- Senator Tom O'Mara, Senator Fred Akshar, Senator George Borrello, Assemblywoman Marjorie Byrnes, Assemblyman Chris Friend, Assemblyman Joe Giglio and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano -- have sent a letter to Cuomo warning that the inclusion of neighboring state workers in the required travel advisory quarantine would be devastating to local economies across the Southern Tier region.

Area business leaders initially brought the concern to their attention. Representatives of the Chemung County and Greater Corning Area chambers of commerce noted that a significant portion of the Southern Tier workforce resides in Pennsylvania. It is estimated that nearly 3,000 Pennsylvania residents are employed by businesses located across the border in Chemung County alone. Overall, approximately 9,500 Pennsylvania residents work within the Southern Tier region. Likewise, more than 6,300 residents of the Southern Tier work in Pennsylvania.

In their August 3 letter to Cuomo, the regional legislators wrote, "Currently, the travel advisory is one of your administration's primary efforts to contain the pandemic and protect the positive trajectory that New York State and our local regions have achieved in controlling its spread. While we understand the need for caution behind the advisory and its accompanying quarantine requirement, we also strongly urge you to take into full consideration the potentially severe economic consequences for regions like ours that border another state, in this case Pennsylvania, where there is a daily influx of out-of-state workers essential to our local economies."

The letter [see attached copy above] outlines a worst-case scenario where, for example, Pennsylvania is added to the Cuomo travel advisory largely because of coronavirus spikes in large cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (while border counties remain stable).

“Consequently, we appreciate this opportunity to urge you to be pro-active on this consideration and, anticipating a worst-case scenario, immediately work to clarify this concern for employers and workers and, especially, devise protocols that will continue to accommodate across-the-border employment. In fact, we have read the recent reports that you have provided an exemption from the travel advisory/quarantine for New Jersey residents and believe that residents and workers from New York’s other border states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Vermont should be provided a similar exemption,” the legislators wrote to Cuomo.