



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara applauds repeal of 'Fiber Tax' to spur broadband expansion: Says action will help close rural digital divide

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 8, 2022

| ISSUE: **BROADBAND ACCESS**



We have worked to ensure that rural, upstate New York not be left behind in this mission to bring effective broadband to all New Yorkers.

Albany, N.Y., April 8—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today applauded the repeal of the state's costly "fiber-optic tax" in the 2022-2023 budget.

Over the past several weeks, O'Mara and Senate GOP colleagues have been calling for the repeal action noting how it has hindered efforts to expand broadband access and close the digital divide in rural communities.

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, said, "Access to high-speed Internet has become a fundamental need for our families, businesses, farms, local economies, first responders, schools, and the overall success and strength of rural, local communities. We have worked to ensure that rural, upstate New York not be left behind in this mission to bring effective broadband to all New Yorkers, but new initiatives and investments are needed. This 'fiber tax' repeal is the single most important action the state can immediately take to try to ensure that broadband development across rural, upstate New York receives an equal and fair commitment."

The Senate approved the budget legislation providing the repeal earlier today.

O'Mara joined several Senate Republican colleagues at a Capitol news conference in February to highlight the need to repeal the fee, established in 2019, for accessing state rights-of-way for fiber optic cables. The legislators said this "fiber tax" only applies to broadband providers and stands as a serious obstacle to broadband development and expansion in rural, upstate communities.

[Watch Senator O'Mara's comments on the "fiber tax" repeal [HERE](#).]

O'Mara and his colleagues said that the \$8 million in state revenue being generated by the fiber tax is holding up billions of dollars in broadband deployment projects throughout the state.