



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senator O'Mara joins Governor Hochul, other local leaders on tour of storm-ravaged local communities

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 13, 2024

| ISSUE: **STORM RECOVERY**



Senator O'Mara joined Governor Hochul and other local leaders on Sunday's tour of area communities devastated by flooding..

“It’s a relief you are here to provide for these individuals and small businesses moving forward to get back on their feet to be able to sustain their lives here, where we know, is one of the most beautiful places on earth to live, to raise a family, work and farm. It’s a great community and we’re all in it together.”

Below from the *Hornell Sun*:

As residents of South Canisteo were picking up the pieces of their damaged homes and cleaning mud and debris from living rooms, elected officials from all levels of government, from the village to the governor, came to the region to see what happened and offer help.

Sen. Tom O'Mara has been vocal about his issues with decisions by Gov. Kathy Hochul, but on Sunday, he praised the work being done to help residents of Allegany and Steuben counties above and beyond insurance claims. For many residents, companies would not even give them insurance.

"Let's start with what has happened during this fairly short time. Heavy rains of four to six inches impacted counties in Steuben and Allegany," Hochul said. "We had flash flood emergencies issued in Steuben and Allegany counties ... We had flash floods in all this area. We had our swift water teams from the state. They had to come and help the local crews and emergency teams. In advance of the storm, we activated over 100 members of the National Guard just to be on hand to help."

After meeting with residents, Hochul said it was "miraculous that there are no major injuries or fatalities."

And now that it's over, Hochul said it's time to help residents financially and with the department of transportation. This was a concern many who were affected by the storm voiced to the Wellsville Sun and Hornell Sun the past two days.

"Our state teams will be on the ground answering questions, helping people fill out forms so they can get their insurance money sooner. It's really important for homeowners and businesses to keep track of all their expenses and what they lost," Hochul said. "Make an inventory of your belongings. And if you can't resolve a dispute with the insurance company, then we want you to file a complaint with our department."

“But I also said we have to give people more help just to get back on their feet while they’re waiting for that insurance, while we’re trying to get our lives back in order. I’ve declared the Housing and Community Renewal agency will launch an emergency repair program for homeowners in Allegany, Delaware, Franklin, Steuben and St. Lawrence counties that were impacted by the storm,” she continued. “All these homeowners who have been impacted will be eligible for grants of up to \$50,000 to help pay for reimbursement of expenses related to the storm that aren’t covered by insurance or it is other disaster relief. This is a newer program. This program did not exist three years ago when Fred hit this area. It exists now. I said, ‘We have to be there as a stop gap measure to help these communities and these individuals get back on their feet.’ “

She then thanked Sen. O’Mara and Steuben County Legislative Chair Kelly Fitzpatrick for their help.

“We have a senator, Tom O’Mara. He fights hard for this community in Albany, I can tell you this. He’s not going anywhere. And to all the elected officials standing behind me (many from Canisteo and Steuben County) we had a meeting a short time ago, they love their community so much,” Hochul said. “They feel heartbroken that the people they care so much about – their own neighbors, their communities, their little businesses – have suffered such an extraordinary, great deal. And I thank them for caring so much.

“We have our Steuben County Legislative Chair Kelly Fitzpatrick. We spoke on Friday. She put on her best strong voice. You’re going to hear from her in a couple minutes what has happened in her community. We have Steuben County Administrator Jack Wheeler here. Jack, thank you for everything you’ve done. We have mayors and supervisors from Canisteo, Addison, Woodhull, Jasper – all over. They’re here today because they stand united in rebuilding and sharing ideas and sharing resources. They will help us get this done,” Hochul added.

O'Mara said, "Thank you Governor for being here and being here so quickly. This is a devastating event hee with Debby rolling through, similar to Fred rolling through a few years ago. The resilience of these communities has been amazing. the outpouring of support from neighbors — from strangers quite frankly — from the Amish community, helping across the region to help people get back on their feet.

"It's a strong community. You being here means so much to everyone, me included, but particularly those impacted by this devastation," O'Mara continued. "It's a relief you are here to provide for these individuals and small businesses moving forward to get back on their feet to be able to sustain their lives here, where we know, is one of the most beautiful places on earth to live, to raise a family, work and farm. It's a great community and we're all in it together."

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