



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara, Assemblyman Palmesano highlight rural legislation

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 12, 2011



Albany, N.Y., July 12—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R-C-I, Corning), each following their first session on the Legislature's 10-member Commission on Rural Resources, said today that several pieces of the commission's 2011 agenda were approved by the Senate and Assembly and are expected to be signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

O'Mara and Palmesano were appointed to the commission by legislative leaders earlier this year. The commission is chaired by western New York Senator Catharine Young (R-Olean).

The local lawmakers reflected on the commission's work and expressed optimism that it would advance an even more comprehensive "Rural New York Agenda" in the coming year.

"For us, one of the real bright spots of the 2011 legislative session was this chance to help build a more widespread, bipartisan recognition of the key short- and long-term challenges facing rural communities across our region and throughout upstate New York," O'Mara and Palmesano said in a joint statement.

"We need to keep building support for a comprehensive agenda for rural New York in the Legislature. We hope we can successfully build on Albany's newfound spirit of cooperation and enact meaningful new programs and services for rural regions."

O'Mara and Palmesano highlighted the following pieces of legislation, developed by the commission, that were approved by both houses of the Legislature in 2011 and now go to the governor to be signed into law:

> S.4360/A.5830 would allow municipalities to bid out contracts on contracts already bid out by a county for public works projects. It's aimed at giving municipalities the flexibility to utilize larger contracts issued by counties, with the potential for reduced cost savings and time savings for smaller municipalities;

> S.5431/A.5366 provides that outpatient services for New York's 13 rural critical access hospitals are reimbursed by Medicaid in the same way that Medicare reimburses their services – on the basis of reasonable cost, a move that would help to ensure the long-term financial viability of these vital rural health care facilities;

> S.5447/A.7893 extends eligibility for assistance through the Health Occupation and Workplace Demonstration Program to licensed home care services agencies, a particularly key component of rural New York's health care infrastructure. The measure also allows providers to obtain regulatory and administrative waivers to develop, implement and evaluate programs to test innovative methods for the organization and delivery of services; and

> S.2840/A.3556 adds the chairman of the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, the state commissioners of health and education, and the president of the state Environmental Facilities Corporation as members of the New York Ocean and Great Lakes Ecosystem Council.