



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

'First no eye tests, now no road tests?' Senator O'Mara opposes DMV plan to close Steuben County road test sites

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 27, 2011

| ISSUE: **DMV (DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES)**



Bath, N.Y., October 27—In a strongly worded letter today to state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Commissioner Barbara J. Fiala, Senator Tom O'Mara (R-C, Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R-C-I, Corning) urged the commissioner to scrap a plan to reduce the number of drivers' road tests locations in Steuben County from three to one.

Under the DMV plan, which the area's state lawmakers said they weren't informed of until late last week, Steuben County would be left with a single DMV road test site located in Corning. Current sites in Bath and Hornell would be closed.

In their letter to Fiala, which was also sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo, O'Mara and Palmesano wrote, "First no eye tests, now no road tests? What's going on inside the state Department of Motor Vehicles? These are questions being asked by many of the local officials and residents we represent and so, in all seriousness, we appreciate this opportunity to urge your reconsideration of a DMV plan just recently, and unexpectedly, brought to our attention to reduce the number of drivers' road test locations in Steuben County from three to one. As you know, this plan has drawn the ire of local officials across the county – and we fully share their opposition.

"First and foremost, please note that we strongly oppose the elimination of any of Steuben County's test sites. It makes no sense. It would do an unnecessary disservice and pose great difficulty to many Steuben County residents who will be forced, in many instances, to travel significant distances to access a test site. Furthermore, it appears to be an arbitrary action undertaken with no local input or consultation and, therefore, no genuine understanding of its consequences for one of New York State's geographically largest (and mostly rural) counties."

O'Mara and Palmesano said that their opposition to the latest DMV move falls in line with their rejection of last month's DMV proposal to do away with required eye tests as part of New York's driver's license renewal process -- it might streamline a state process and cut some costs, they argue, but only at great expense to local governments and residents.

That's not a reasonable or fair tradeoff, according to O'Mara and Palmesano, and they're urging the Cuomo administration to shelve this latest idea too.

They wrote, "As we recently stressed in our opposition to your plan to eliminate the eye test requirement, we can't help but join many of our constituents in questioning the soundness of this latest proposed change in state operations. The administration's ongoing commitment to effectiveness, efficiency and cost savings throughout state government is admirable, and we applaud it. In this specific instance, however, we strongly believe that the minimal savings to the state would, in our estimation, be more than offset and far outweighed by the subsequent loss in local revenues and, more importantly, by the expense in time and money to individual Steuben County residents already facing many other economic and fiscal burdens and challenges.

"In our view, this latest DMV action should be reconsidered in the same manner as the eye test proposal and, we hope, permanently shelved. As always, we're happy to answer any questions you or your staff may have or provide any input into how DMV actions would impact our localities. We hope that you won't ever hesitate to contact us in the future if we can do so."

[see "State DMV upsets local officials" from the October 23rd Corning *Leader* attached below]