



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Palmesano, Friend urge support for 'Keep Monterey Open!' online petition ~ 'Saving Monterey Shock Rally' set for September 9th in Watkins Glen

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**Elmira, N.Y., September 5**—In late July the administration of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo unveiled a plan to shut down the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility in Schuyler County next year, and now State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats), State Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) and State Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats) are encouraging area residents to sign an online “Keep Monterey Open!” petition that’s been launched to help rally public support and convince the administration to keep the Monterey facility open.

The area state lawmakers also invited the public to attend a “Saving Monterey Shock Rally!” at the Watkins Glen Community Center (155 South Clute Park Drive) on Monday, September 9, 2013, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Also attending and speaking at Monday’s rally will be Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli, Schuyler County Legislature Chairman Dennis Fagan and other area government leaders and representatives of not-for-profit organizations who’ve benefitted from the participation of Monterey inmate work crews on numerous community enhancement projects over the years.

The local online petition comes after a July 26, 2013 announcement by the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) that it will close Monterey and three other state correctional facilities over the next 12 months as part of a statewide downsizing and consolidation effort.

O’Mara, Palmesano, Friend, Congressman Tom Reed and other local leaders have been **critical of the Cuomo administration’s decision**, noting the loss of local jobs and other local economic consequences that will result from the facility’s closing, and highlighting Monterey’s record of fiscal and correctional services success – a record which was praised by the Cuomo administration itself just last September as part of the facility’s 25th Anniversary celebration. Monterey was New York’s first “shock” facility. There are currently 124 employees at the Monterey facility.

O’Mara, Palmesano and Friend also noted that Monterey’s closing comes on the heels of another Cuomo administration plan to shut down inpatient services at and diminish the overall role of the Elmira Psychiatric Center – a move that could result in additional job losses and other economic consequences locally, as well as put at risk the quality of mental health care services across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

In a joint statement, O’Mara, Palmesano and Friend said: *“The overall goals of downsizing and cost-effectiveness in government are steps in the right direction. But the Cuomo administration’s approach is hitting our region especially hard. We’re continuing to question these actions from both a fiscal and programmatic standpoint. We’re strongly opposed to the changes proposed for the Elmira Psychiatric Center, which make no sense at all for New York State fiscally or from a quality-of-care perspective. The same goes for Monterey, which for more than twenty-five years has been widely recognized as an innovative and successful corrections initiative. Shock incarceration has saved the state over a billion dollars. Monterey inmate work crews have saved local communities and taxpayers millions of dollars while accomplishing vital community enhancement projects. Monterey’s administrators and staff have turned lives around. It’s been a cost-effective, and fiscally prudent and successful facility. We’ll continue to raise all of these concerns and questions, and keep working with many other local leaders to make the case to the Cuomo administration that there are better ways to achieve the short- and long-term goals we share without putting local jobs and economies at risk, or diminishing the effectiveness of criminal justice in New York State. This online ‘Keep Monterey Open!’ petition is a great way to give a voice to local support.”*

A link to the “Keep Monterey Open!” petition can be found on the websites of each of the lawmakers, who said the petition is aimed at sparking widespread public support for the

continued operation of the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility and to urge Governor Andrew Cuomo to reconsider the decision.

To find out more and sign the petition, [CLICK HERE](#).