



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Schuyler County awarded state funding to assist soil and water quality practices on area farms

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 26, 2014

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**Watkins Glen, N.Y., June 26**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big Flats) said today that Schuyler County received the highest statewide funding level under the latest round of state grants to help New York State farmers implement enhanced soil and water conservation practices.

The Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District, which applied for and will administer the grant, will receive \$1,683,820 to assist projects at 20 farms over a five-county area. According to district officials, specific projects will focus on protecting multiple drinking water sources including Seneca Lake, Cayuta Creek, the Chemung and

Susquehanna rivers and, ultimately, the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay.

“These grants directly benefit the farms in our communities, but they are even more far-reaching to protect valuable natural resources for all of the residents that live in these communities,” said Schuyler County Soil and Water District Manager Jerry Verrigni. “They help to enhance these natural resources and make farms more sustainable, which aids our open space, rural character and tourism-driven economy. These grants also have a dramatic multiplier effect to help support and create a multitude of jobs for contractors, supply companies, quarries, seed companies, engineering firms, trucking companies, and more. We are greatly appreciative for the opportunity that exists to participate in what is one of the most effective, efficient grant programs that exists statewide.”

“These are wise state investments to keep our farmers competitive and, at the same time, protect our natural resources for the long run and strengthen the local economy,” said O’Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “We’re investing in the long standing and successful partnership between local farmers and local conservation districts to achieve vital economic and environmental protection goals.”

[read more in the *Star-Gazette* and *The Odessa File*]

The latest round of competitive state grants, totaling \$13.8 million to help more than 200 farms statewide, were awarded to 32 soil and water conservation districts. The funding is aimed at addressing water quality challenges facing farms in priority watersheds throughout New York State by supporting the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) framework. The projects are designed to further the implementation of agricultural water quality best management practices to protect natural resources and, at the same time, maintain the economic viability of New York State agriculture.

Local conservation districts, including Schuyler, work to implement plans in line with the goals of local farms and the needs of local watersheds.

Schuyler County Soil and Water will partner with area farmers to implement conservation best management practices including but not limited to waste management systems, soil conservation systems, composting facilities, silage leachate controls, stream corridor management, and erosion control practices.