



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'MARA SAYS INCREASED STATE BROADBAND INVESTMENT CRITICAL TO UPSTATE, RURAL NEW YORK COMMUNITIES

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 8, 2016

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**Elmira, N.Y., January 8**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), a member of the Legislature's joint, bipartisan Rural Resources Commission which has long advocated state investment in rural broadband development, today welcomed the state's call for additional investment through the **New NY Broadband** initiative established in last year's state budget.

He again stressed that any investment in high-speed Internet expansion statewide must give equal attention to unserved and underserved areas across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and all of Upstate New York.

Earlier today, **Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that the state has issued a \$500- million solicitation** for private-sector partners to join the program. The hope is that the move will significantly expand Internet access throughout New York with an emphasis on unserved and underserved areas. The goal of the initiative is to bring high-speed Internet access to every New Yorker by the end of 2018.

O'Mara said, "Access to high-speed Internet has become a fundamental need for our citizens, our communities, our businesses, and the success and strength of our local economies. Once again, we must ensure that Upstate New York is not left behind under this initiative. There are some incredible local efforts underway, like the Southern Tier Network, making great strides to expand and improve our regional access. This ongoing state investment, if it's done right, could help accelerate these badly needed expansions and truly ensure that broadband development across rural, Upstate New York receives an equal and fair commitment."

According to today's announcement, the New NY Broadband solicitation put forth today reflects input from a Request for Information issued in 2015 that sought input from providers, elected officials, consumer groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Phase one of the RFP Grant Guidelines and Application Questions are now available on the New York State Broadband Program Office website at:

**<https://www.nysbroadband.ny.gov/node/376>**

Applications may be submitted through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application Portal beginning Tuesday, March 1, 2016, and are due on Friday, April 15, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. Applicants must be able to complete projects by December 31, 2018. Subsequent

rounds of funding will be announced throughout 2016.