



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Governor signs into law O'Mara-Lupardo legislation to advance New York State's industrial hemp industry

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 19, 2016

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It's great economic news that we're moving forward to help New York State secure a strong position at the forefront of an industry that can diversify and strengthen our agricultural economy, generate revenue and create jobs.

**Albany, N.Y., August 19** -- New York State's industrial hemp industry took another significant step forward today as Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law legislation sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell) that will continue to position New York as a national leader within the developing industry.

In June, both houses of the Legislature approved the new law (**S6960/A9310, Chapter 256 of the Laws of 2016**) that will allow for the transportation, processing, sale, and distribution of hemp grown as part of the State's research pilot program. It also authorizes universities, including Cornell University, and partner farmers to study and establish business and economic opportunities that will lay the groundwork for a fully-fledged agricultural industry once the crop is fully legalized by the federal government.

O'Mara, who serves as a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "This new law significantly strengthens the foundation Assemblywoman Lupardo and I have been building over the past few years to place New York State at the forefront of a new industry with the potential to diversify our agricultural economy, generate revenue and create jobs. We're moving forward to ensure that the development and growth of the industrial hemp industry will provide valuable new economic opportunities and a competitive edge for Southern Tier and Finger Lakes farmers and agribusinesses, together with the state's agricultural industry overall."

Lupardo said, "New York's industrial hemp program is off to a tremendous start. Seeds were planted in July and plants that are harvested this fall will now be able to be processed and sold as a result of this legislation. Industrial hemp will benefit not only local agriculture, but has the potential for numerous manufacturing opportunities in the Southern Tier and throughout the state."

The lawmakers noted that the **New York Farm Bureau**, Cornell University researchers and other agricultural leaders and farm advocates recognize industrial hemp as a potentially lucrative way to provide new economic opportunities and a competitive edge for state farmers.

Research of industrial hemp by states was permitted as part of the 2014 US Farm Bill (§7606). New York's pilot program was established following the enactment of legislation sponsored by Lupardo and O'Mara later that year. Earlier this year, regulations for the program were finalized and the first licenses were issued. JD Farms in Eaton, New York is operating under the license awarded to Morrisville State College and is the first private farm in the state to obtain seeds for cultivation.

"We are really excited to see this bill signed into law by the Governor," said Dan Dolgin, co-owner of JD Farms. "In order for the state to understand the true economic value of the industrial hemp industry, license-holders must be able to participate in the marketplace as credible growers, manufacturers and distributors of tangible product cultivated in New York soil. This bill makes it possible for us to negotiate price-points with interested buyers and produce statistically relevant data about the current state of the market for other farmers and institutions interested in participating in the program."

Both the stalk and seed from hemp can be used in the production of a variety of goods including textiles, building materials, paper, food and environmental products such as biofuels. It is a source of cannabidiol, a chemical compound used in medical marijuana applications, and is also rich in Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids, which gives it numerous health benefits to both humans and animals.

According to a 2015 report, retail sales from imported hemp products were estimated at \$600 million in the United States.