



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara welcomes state's first-ever 'Industrial Hemp Summit' at Cornell University: O'Mara has joined Southern Tier Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo to sponsor several new laws encouraging the industry's growth (UPDATED)

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 18, 2017

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**Ithaca, N.Y., April 18**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), who has sponsored several new laws over the past three years seeking to secure an economic foothold for New York's farmers in the nation's burgeoning industrial hemp industry, today participated in New York State's first-ever **"Industrial Hemp Summit"** at Cornell University.

O'Mara joined Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, Southern Tier Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell), state Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball, other state and local leaders, representatives of Cornell University and members of the state's agricultural sector at the summit, which Governor Andrew Cuomo first proposed earlier this year.

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "Assemblywoman Lupardo and I have been working closely with Governor Cuomo's administration over the past few years to put 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. We appreciate Governor Cuomo's decision to hold this important summit in the Southern Tier."

**[UPDATE, April 19:** Read and watch more on *WENY-TV*, **"Leaders Host First Industrial Hemp Summit in Southern Tier"**, and from *WETM-TV*, **"New York Hemp Summit Discusses Benefit and Challenges in Industrial Farming"**, and the *USA Today Network*, **"Industrial hemp: NY's new cash crop"**]

The summit was held at the Biotechnology Building on the Cornell campus. It featured a round table-type forum and panel discussions among legislators, researchers, farmers, manufacturers and other industry stakeholders to highlight the challenges and strategies for expanding the industry in New York. O'Mara and other supporters view the industry as a

potentially valuable way to diversity and strengthen the state's leading agricultural industry.

**Since 2014, O'Mara has worked closely with Lupardo (D-Endwell) to sponsor and secure the enactment of laws that have jump-started the industry's growth in New York.** Last June, for example, both houses of the Legislature approved a new law (**S6960/A9310, Chapter 256 of the Laws of 2016**) allowing for the transportation, processing, sale, and distribution of hemp grown as part of the New York's research pilot program. It also authorized universities, including Cornell, and partner farmers to study and establish business and economic opportunities that will lay the groundwork for a fully-fledged agricultural industry.

O'Mara applauded a provision in the recently enacted 2017-2018 state budget that lifts the cap on the number of state farms that can receive licenses to grow and manufacture hemp. Previous law capped at 10 the number of farms allowed to grow and manufacture hemp. Cuomo proposed eliminating the cap earlier this year to encourage the industry's expansion.

Industry advocates have noted that hemp manufacturing could become a \$1 billion industry in New York State.

Read more **[HERE](#)**.