



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

New York's 'Industrial Hemp Working Group' meets for the first time: O'Mara has joined Gov. Cuomo, Southern Tier Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo to sponsor laws encouraging the industry's growth

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 20, 2017

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The new Industrial Hemp Working Group, established earlier this year as part of a new law sponsored by Senator O'Mara and Assemblywoman Lupardo, is working to secure an economic foothold for state farmers in the nation's burgeoning industrial hemp industry.

**Albany, N.Y., September 20**—New York State’s newly established “Industrial Hemp Working Group” met for the first time at the capital today in what state Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), a member of the new group, called “an exciting effort to spark the growth of industrial hemp manufacturing in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and statewide.”

Since 2014, O’Mara and his Southern Tier colleague, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo (D-Endwell), have worked closely with the Cuomo administration to enact new laws, and establish new policies and programs that have jump-started the industry’s growth in New York State.

The new Industrial Hemp Working Group, established earlier this year as part of a new law O’Mara and Lupardo sponsored (**S.6787/A.8509, Chapter 88 of the Laws of 2017**), is working to secure an economic foothold for state farmers in the nation’s burgeoning industrial hemp industry. The group is comprised of researchers and industry leaders to examine and develop policy initiatives, and promotion and marketing opportunities.

O’Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, “I’m grateful to be part of New York State’s Industrial Hemp Working Group and to continue working with the Cuomo administration, the Legislature, and researchers and growers to keep this effort moving forward. New state laws and policies, and ongoing state investments have continued to strengthen the foundation we’ve built over the past several years to place New York State at the forefront of a new, potentially billion-dollar industry. 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 farmers and agribusinesses, generate revenue and create jobs.”

In addition to O'Mara and Lupardo, the working group includes the following members: Richard A. Ball, Commissioner, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (Chair); Mike Barnhart, Plant Science Laboratories, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets; Susie Cody, NYS Hemp Industries Association; Benjamin Banks-Dobson, Old Mud Creek Farm LLC; Dan Dolgin, JD Farms; Ira Fair, 21st Century Hemp; Liisa Fiedelholz, formerly of Ann, Inc.; Jennifer Gilbert Jenkins, SUNY Morrisville; David Grusenmeyer, New York Farm Viability Institute; Marc Privitera, PreProcess, Inc.; Larry Smart, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Julie Suarez, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Nicholas Vita, Columbia Care LLC; Steven Wood, SUNY Research Foundation; and Jeff Williams, New York Farm Bureau.

Also today, the state announced an open solicitation for farmers, businesses, and research institutions interested in growing and processing industrial hemp as part of the State's Industrial Hemp Agricultural Research Pilot Program. Producers, businesses, and universities interested in participating in the program can find out more [HERE](#). The open solicitation period ends on November 22, 2017.

The research grant program is already assisting the planting of industrial hemp on nearly 2,000 acres across the state for research purposes, expanding industrial hemp production in New York nearly 6,000% from 30 acres in 2016.

According to Cornell University, industrial hemp is a valuable commodity crop. Clothing, consumer products like soap, insulation, and more are made from the plant's stalks and seeds. Hemp stalk and seed is also used to produce a variety of other goods including textiles, building materials, paper, food and environmental products such as biofuels, as well as being utilized for fiber, hempseed oil, and seed production. It is also a source of cannabidiol, a chemical compound used in medical marijuana applications, and is rich in Omega 3 and Omega 6 fatty acids, which gives it numerous health benefits to both humans and animals.

Hemp products generated nearly \$600 million in U.S. sales in 2015.

Read today's full announcement [HERE](#).