



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara welcomes new Drinking Water Quality Council: O'Mara, Senate colleagues began 2017 with call for stronger state commitment to water quality

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 22, 2017

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The work of the Drinking Water Quality Council is a critical step toward ensuring the effectiveness and timeliness of New York State's short- and long-term response to the fundamental challenge of clean water.

**Albany, N.Y., September 22**—In early March, State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), who chairs the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, and his Senate Republican

colleagues **proposed a comprehensive series of initiatives** to improve drinking water safety and the quality of water infrastructure for all New Yorkers.

Many of the Senate initiatives **were approved as part of the 2017-2018 New York State budget** – including the state’s largest-ever one-time investment, \$2.5 billion, to address water quality challenges statewide.

Today, O’Mara joined Governor Andrew Cuomo and other state leaders to announce that another key Senate proposal is moving forward: the establishment of a “Drinking Water Quality Council.”

"The work of the Drinking Water Quality Council is a critical step toward ensuring the effectiveness and timeliness of New York State's short- and long-term response to the fundamental challenge of clean water," said O’Mara, **who in 2016 developed and sponsored the first law in the nation requiring public schools to test their drinking water systems for lead contamination.** “The Senate looks forward to continuing to work with Governor Cuomo and the Assembly to achieve a water quality future across New York that is second to none."

The new, 12-member council is comprised of public health experts, educators, and scientists, and chaired by the commissioners of state departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. It’s charged with setting New York-specific standards for federally-unregulated contaminants; developing a list of contaminants for which testing is required by public water suppliers; and establishing a clear notification process for municipalities, state agencies, and the public.

O’Mara said, “We know that the many challenges surrounding water quality are here to stay. Consequently, the Senate made this issue a top priority in 2017. This year’s actions, including the creation of the Drinking Water Quality Council, focus on helping localities undertake vital and long-overdue water infrastructure projects, including sewer and municipal water

line repairs, and fully recognize that drinking water quality concerns and crises regionally, statewide, and across the nation have become increasingly acute. It's a timely, commonsense strategy that makes great environmental, fiscal, and economic sense.”

[See today's full announcement on the Council appointments [HERE](#).]