



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara named to Environment-Agriculture-Housing budget conference committee meeting today at the Capitol (UPDATED)

THOMAS F. O'MARA March 15, 2018

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**Albany, N.Y., March 15**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I- Big Flats) has been named by the Senate leadership to serve on the Legislature's joint budget conference subcommittee on Environment/Agriculture/Housing as the next step in New York's budget adoption process gets underway today at the Capitol.

The Legislature's **10 individual, joint budget conference subcommittees** will start holding public meetings today to begin settling Senate and Assembly differences over the 2018-19 New York State budget. The conference committee process more fully sets the table for final budget talks with Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The budget meetings will be streamed live on the following Senate website:

**<http://www.nysenate.gov/events>**. The meetings continue through next week.

Earlier this week each house of the Legislature approved "one-house" budget resolutions outlining the changes they'd like to see made to Cuomo's budget proposal.

"The Senate budget renews and revitalizes New York's commitment to job growth, tax relief, infrastructure, agriculture, environmental conservation, and community development, health and safety," said O'Mara. "The core proposals underpinning our fiscal strategy remain true to getting the middle class, farmers, small businesses and seniors out from under America's highest tax burden, and creating an overall stronger state commitment, across the board, to encouraging and sustaining local economies and local private-sector job growth."

O'Mara, who chairs the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said that his conference committee assignment affords the opportunity to have direct input into final budget negotiations that will impact the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

He said, for example, that the Senate budget plan supports the inclusion of \$300 million to continue fully funding the state's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), a funding level that conservation groups and environmental advocates have strongly supported. The EPF provides funding for critical environmental initiatives including clean air and water projects. Studies have shown that for every dollar of EPF funds invested in land and water protection, the state and localities get back seven dollars in economic benefits.

O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said that it's also especially important that the Senate budget restores more than \$10 million in agricultural program funding cuts proposed by Cuomo earlier this year. Since 2011, O'Mara and his colleagues have initiated budget restorations and funding for new programs totaling more than \$50 million. Among other programs and institutions, the governor this year has proposed to cut or eliminate funding for the Wine and Grape Foundation, Future Farmers of America, Tractor Rollover Prevention, Farm Net (Farm Family Assistance), Integrated Pest Management, and the Cornell Diagnostic Lab along with other vital Cornell research and study programs invaluable to the dairy industry among other critical agricultural challenges including food safety research and study, disease detection and prevention, honeybee die-off, invasive species, pesticide use, and rabies prevention and treatment.

Once available, an archived video of today's meeting can be viewed [HERE](#).

View the full Senate budget resolution [HERE](#).