



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senate approves O'Mara's legislation establishing paint recycling program to cut costly burden on local governments and foster government-industry cooperation

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 20, 2018

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**Albany, N.Y., June 20**—The State Senate today approved legislation sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, to establish an industry-sponsored "Postconsumer Paint Collection Program" to reduce a costly

burden on local governments that are currently responsible for collecting and disposing of most postconsumer, unused paint.

The Senate unanimously approved O'Mara's legislation ([S9106/A11245](#)) by a vote of 60 to 0. Assemblywoman Crystal People-Stokes (D-Buffalo) sponsors the legislation in the Assembly.

O'Mara said his legislation would create local jobs, provide relief to local property taxpayers, and encourage environmentally sound recycling and disposal of unused paint in New York State. He pointed to the initiative as an example of how government and industry can work together to implement effective environmental policies and programs.

"This legislation exemplifies how much we can accomplish by working together with industry on important environmental concerns. Seeking common ground and cooperation, rather than government cramming unreasonable demands down the throat of industry, can help give New York State a more business-friendly environment and actually result in better, more workable laws," O'Mara said. "Working together can go a long ways on reaching an end result on other important issues that would benefit our state fiscally, economically and environmentally."

The national Product Stewardship Institute ([www.productstewardship.us](http://www.productstewardship.us)) has estimated that nearly 4 million gallons of paint go unused each year in New York State -- with the costs of collecting and managing the paint's disposal mostly falling on local governments. Under O'Mara's legislation, through which paint manufacturers would be responsible for managing the recycling and disposal of unused paint, local governments would save approximately \$31 million annually.

The measure has drawn the support of a range of environmental advocacy organizations, paint industry representatives and municipal agencies. In addition to reduced costs on local

taxpayers, O'Mara said, a Postconsumer Paint Stewardship Program will create convenient recycling opportunities and green sector jobs, reduce disposal in favor of recycling, and result in less waste as consumers will become smarter and more efficient shoppers for paint.

Under the legislation, the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is directed to develop a plan for paint manufacturers and sellers to form and cover the costs of a statewide collection program. The plan would seek to minimize the involvement of local governments in the management of post-consumer paint by reducing its generation and establishing agreements to collect, transport, reuse, recycle, and properly dispose of postconsumer paint using environmentally sound management practices. The measure further specifies that the plan include annual program audits and reports, education and outreach to consumers, and details on how postconsumer paint would be collected, treated, stored, transported and disposed.

The program will seek to ensure that a collection site will be available within a 15-mile radius to at least 90 percent of New York State residents.

States that have implemented comparable programs are showing impressive results. Oregon has collected and recycled over 1,000,000 gallons of paint since implementing its program in July 2010. California launched its program in 2012 and has over 800 new collection locations accepting paint for recycling.