



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## 'Drug Take Back Act' signed into law to establish industry-funded program for the proper collection and disposal of their products

THOMAS F. O'MARA July 10, 2018

| ISSUE: **PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL**



The “Drug Take Back Act” calls for the establishment of an industry-funded, statewide pharmaceutical drug take-back program

**Albany, N.Y., July 10**—Legislation sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to further combat the abuse of prescription drugs and prevent unused drugs from contaminating water supplies, has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The legislation is also sponsored in the Senate by Senator Kemp Hannon (R-Nassau), Chair of the Senate Health Committee.

The “Drug Take Back Act” (**S9100/A9576**) calls for the establishment of an industry-funded, statewide pharmaceutical drug take-back program. It advances a “product stewardship” approach to the challenge of disposing of unwanted medications. Pharmaceutical manufacturers will be responsible for all of the costs of the initiative including public education and awareness, as well as the collection, transport and proper disposal of unwanted drugs. The Act further requires chain pharmacies and mail-order pharmacies to provide consumers with on-site collection, prepaid mail-back envelopes, or other federally approved methods to encourage safe drug disposal.

O’Mara, Chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said, "It's incredibly important to do anything and everything we can to complement and support the efforts of local law enforcement and other community leaders to combat prescription drug abuse. These efforts include National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days and other initiatives like this one to facilitate the collection, and safe and responsible disposal of unused medications. This new law will greatly expand the number of permanent, locally based drop-off locations and be a very positive, cost-effective addition to the state's ongoing, overall strategy to protect our communities and local environments."

O’Mara noted that while law enforcement agencies have drop-off points and collection boxes – and other government agencies conduct drug take-back days to help properly and safely dispose of many drugs – additional efforts are needed. Other state-level initiatives to expand the number of permanent collection sites in communities are conducted on a voluntary basis, are limited in scope, and participation remains low. “Product stewardship” is the concept that the manufacturers, producers, or sellers of a product should take responsibility for minimizing the product's environmental impact throughout all stages of its life cycle,

including disposal, recycling, or destruction.

The Drug Take Back Act will create a unified, statewide drug take-back program that will save government and taxpayer dollars, and reduce medication misuse. Additionally, the program will protect New York State's waterways by preventing drugs from being improperly disposed of by flushing or other means that contaminate water bodies and negatively affect aquatic life. Last year, New York made a historic investment in improving and protecting state waterways. Keeping drugs out of water supplies is another important and necessary step.