



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara co-sponsors new law to help protect New York's active farmland: New law strengthens Farmland Protection grant program

THOMAS F. O'MARA August 1, 2018

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Albany, N.Y., August 1—Legislation co-sponsored by New York State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to strengthen the state's existing **Farmland Protection Implementation Grant Program** has been signed into law.

The legislation O'Mara co-sponsors (**S8362, Chapter 158 of the Laws of 2018**) enhances the grant program to better protect farmland, improves the chances of farmer-to-farmer property transactions, and keeps active farmland in use.

“We need to keep taking every step that we can to ensure that farmers will always have the opportunity to keep their land in farming and to create new opportunities for future farmers,” said O'Mara, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “New York State has long valued agriculture as a foundation of our culture and economy, and this new law will help it remain our leading industry.”

New York farmers who are age 65 and older own or manage nearly a third of the more than seven million acres of farmland in the state. Many of these farmers do not have identified successors to take over their farms. As these farmers retire, roughly two million acres of farmland in New York are, or will soon be, transitioning to new ownership. Without new protections in place to promote sales of farmland to another working farmer, new ownership of protected farmland is not guaranteed to pass to another farmer.

Among other provisions, supporters of the new law say that making farmer-purchaser agreements eligible for state assistance payments under the Farmland Protection Implementation Program could increase opportunities for retiring farmers to keep their farms in the hands of working farmers.

The new law takes effect in 90 days.