



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Legislation co-sponsored by O'Mara to strengthen state response to Lyme and tick-borne diseases signed into law

THOMAS F. O'MARA November 7, 2018

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**

COMBATTING LYME DISEASE



**Senate Task Force
on Lyme & Tick-Borne Diseases**

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Albany, N.Y., November 7—Legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), a member of the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs), to strengthen New York State's response to the rise of these diseases has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The new laws were enacted earlier this week.

“We’ve taken important actions over the past few years to broaden the state’s overall response to the spread of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, but much more needs to be done, particularly in the areas of reporting, testing and treatment, and education and awareness. These new laws will strengthen New York’s response,” said O’Mara.

The new laws will:

- > establish an expert-based Lyme and TBDs Working Group to review current best practices for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of Lyme and TBDs (**S7170, Chapter 337 of the Laws of 2018**, co-sponsored by O’Mara); and
- > require Lyme and tick-borne disease warning signs at all state-managed parks including trail entryways and campgrounds (**S7242, Chapter 354**).

Earlier this year, the Legislature approved legislation, also co-sponsored by O’Mara, to require the state to conduct an impact study considering how infectious diseases and blood-borne pathogens, including Lyme and TBDs, may have correlations with mental illness in infected individuals. The new “Mental Health Impacts Report” would enable better treatment of the mental health consequences associated with these infections (**S7171**). This measure will be sent to Cuomo for final action in the near future.

O’Mara said that all of the measures were part of a comprehensive legislative package representing Senate recommendations first made in a Task Force report released last October, "Ticking Time Bomb: An Update on the Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Epidemic in New York State."