



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara highlights failure to fund continued state investment to combat Lyme, other tick-borne diseases: Calls it a setback to recent efforts to keep focus on stopping the disease's spread

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 4, 2019

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**Albany, N.Y., April 4**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today criticized Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Democratic leaders of the state Senate and Assembly for failing to enhance funding for research, education, and prevention initiatives in the 2019-2020 state

budget to continue combatting Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs).

O'Mara said that the funding should have been carved out as a priority in a state budget totaling over \$175 billion.

"It's ridiculous that Governor Cuomo and the Legislature's Democratic majorities failed to find a penny more for this critical investment. **Important actions over the past several years** have helped broaden the state's overall response to the spread of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, and it has made a difference on the local level. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done, particularly in the areas of reporting, testing and treatment, and education and awareness. The new state budget does nothing more and that's a true setback at a time when we can least afford it," said O'Mara, who served as a member of the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases.

State Senate Republicans had led the way in recent years in securing nearly \$3 million in state funding to advance research, education, and prevention initiatives statewide. O'Mara and his Senate GOP colleagues noted in January, however, that the governor's 2019-20 proposed state budget failed to include funding to build on past efforts and further combat the spread of Lyme and TBDs.

In March, the Senate Republican conference launched a "Let's Talk Ticks!" initiative as an advocacy and educational campaign to continue raising awareness about the importance of ongoing state investment and support.