



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara joins colleagues to examine broadband development in upstate, rural New York: Lawmakers look ahead to actions, investments in next legislative session to help accelerate development

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 20, 2019

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Albany, N.Y., September 20—State Senator Tom O’Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), who has long advocated state investment in rural broadband development, joined legislative colleagues this week in Albany for a public hearing on the development of broadband services in rural, upstate New York.

Wednesday’s joint Senate-Assembly hearing, co-sponsored by the Legislature’s Commission on Rural Resources, drew legislators representing rural regions across upstate New York to the Legislative Office Building to hear testimony from rural broadband stakeholders representing individual communities, businesses and industries, family farms, government agencies, schools and public libraries, health care providers, emergency services, law enforcement, and many others.

O’Mara said, “Access to high-speed Internet has become a fundamental need for our citizens, our businesses, our local economies, our first responders, our schools, and the overall success and strength of rural, local communities. We have worked to ensure that rural, upstate New York is not left behind in this mission to bring effective broadband to all New Yorkers, but new initiatives and investments are needed. This hearing will serve to refocus the Legislature’s attention and I look forward to working with my colleagues to get this job done. There are some incredible local efforts underway making great strides to expand and improve our regional access. Ongoing state investment can help accelerate these badly needed expansions and truly ensure that broadband development across rural, Upstate New York receives an equal and fair commitment.”

The issue remains critical to many of the rural communities O’Mara represents throughout the state’s 58th Senate District that encompasses all of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County (the city and town of Ithaca, and the towns of Enfield, Newfield, and Ulysses). He said that while state government has made important strides through the **New NY Broadband Program** and other initiatives to bring

high-speed broadband to rural areas, more steps need to be taken to accelerate the development.

O'Mara added that this week's hearing will help identify legislative priorities and set the stage for legislative action in the new legislative session beginning in January.