



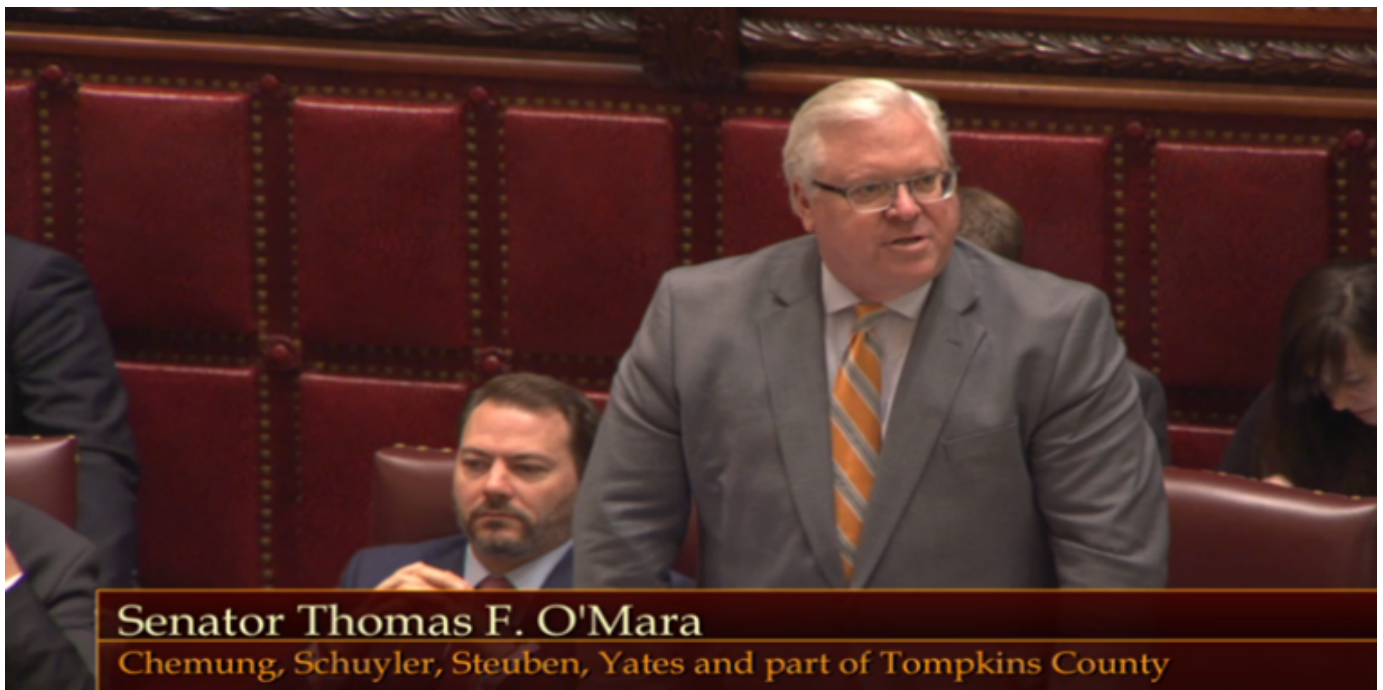
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara will serve on Senate Transportation and Environmental Conservation committees in 2020

THOMAS F. O'MARA January 17, 2020

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**Elmira, N.Y., January 17**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) will continue to serve on the Transportation, Environmental Conservation, and several other key Senate committees in 2020.

O'Mara will continue his post as the ranking Senate Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee and will serve as the top Republican on the Banks Committee. He has also been named a member of the Ethics and Internal Governance Committee.

He was renamed the Senate GOP representative on the Legislature's Administrative Regulations Review Commission (ARCC), a legislative oversight committee charged with monitoring the impact of the state's regulatory process on the economy, as well as on local governments, businesses and industries, and all other regulated parties.

One of the Senate's key committees, O'Mara hopes to continue the Environmental Conservation Committee's focus on numerous regional and statewide challenges including: soil and water conservation and quality, including Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs); water infrastructure development and improvement; energy-related demands including the development and promotion of cleaner sources of energy; preservation initiatives impacting farmland, forests and other state resources; brownfields cleanup; solid and hazardous waste management; invasive and endangered species; and fish and wildlife conservation.

"These challenges and issues confronting New York are vital to the overall environmental and economic well-being of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, and the state as a whole," said O'Mara. "I hope the committee will continue to strengthen the important foundations we've built over the past several years."

From 2015 to 2019, O'Mara served as the Chair of the Environmental Conservation Committee. He pointed to several achievements as highlights of his tenure as the head of the committee, including:

- > the enactment of the nation's first law requiring public schools to test their drinking water systems for lead contamination, a law which O'Mara sponsored;

> a fully funded, \$300-million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The EPF supports critical environmental and economic initiatives including clean air and water projects, flood control and restoration, and farmland preservation;

> the establishment of the “Water Quality Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015” to help localities across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes, and statewide, undertake water infrastructure improvement projects including sewer and pipeline repairs. O’Mara and Senate Republicans fought for the program’s establishment as a priority. O’Mara hopes it will continue to serve as a model for transforming the state-local partnership to the benefit of local communities, local economies and local property taxpayers;

> the extension of the state’s brownfields cleanup program for 10 years and refocusing it on the cleanup of polluted properties Upstate; and

> a new law enacted late last year (Chapter 673 of the Laws of 2019) to establish to establish an industry-sponsored “Postconsumer Paint Collection Program” to reduce a costly burden on local governments that are currently responsible for collecting and disposing of most post-consumer, unused paint. O’Mara first introduced the legislation to create the program in 2016. He said it would create local jobs, provide relief to local property taxpayers, and encourage environmentally sound recycling and disposal of unused paint – pointing to the program as an example of how government and industry can collaborate to implement effective environmental policies and programs.

O’Mara said he remains committed to working with his legislative colleagues and Governor Andrew Cuomo to strike a reasonable, sensible balance between environmental conservation and protection, and the need to spark and strengthen economic growth and private-sector job creation regionally and statewide. He said that environmental conservation- and protection-related issues have long been a focus of his service in the Legislature. His

legislative district encompasses the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions where agriculture, including the hub of the state's wine-and-grape industry in the Finger Lakes, and tourism are economic foundations.

In addition to the Environmental Conservation Committee, O'Mara will also continue to serve on the Senate Transportation Committee, another key Senate assignment that he has held since 2011.

"The ongoing renewal of our regional and statewide transportation infrastructure is one of the most critical priorities we face for economic growth, job creation and overall community development. I look forward to the ongoing opportunity to stay focused on this priority and to continue strengthening New York's commitment, particularly to the improvement, maintenance and redevelopment of local roads and bridges statewide," said O'Mara, noting that local roads and bridges account for 87% of the roads, 52% of the bridges, and 48% of the vehicle mileage logged in New York State.

Since 2013, O'Mara and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) have worked to build a strong, bipartisan coalition within the Legislature working closely with local highway superintendents, county executives, mayors and other local leaders from every corner of the state in support of local roads, bridges, and culverts. Their efforts have helped to increase state support for local transportation infrastructure significantly since 2013.

O'Mara stressed that all of his committee assignments will allow him to focus on many of the key issues still facing the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, including strengthening industries like agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, environmental conservation, public safety and criminal justice, and transportation.

“These committees directly impact so many of the key issues facing our localities, from the future of farming and manufacturing to tax relief and overall Upstate job creation. These assignments offer the chance for direct input on a range of policy areas critical to the short- and long-term future and strength of our local communities and economies,” said O’Mara.

The 58th Senate District is comprised of Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Yates counties, and a part of Tompkins County (the city and town of Ithaca, and the towns of Enfield, Newfield, and Ulysses).