



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara again calls on Governor Hochul to reject Farm Wage Board recommendation to lower overtime threshold

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 6, 2022

| ISSUE: **FARM WAGE BOARD**

SAVE NEW YORK'S FARMS

Albany's 40 HOUR Overtime Mandate would DEVASTATE Local Family Farms

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and Department of Labor 518-457-2746

It will spark the loss of more family farms and the livelihoods these farms support across the industry and throughout hundreds of local economies. Now is no time to risk regulating and mandating an even more uncertain future for family farmers, farm workers, farm communities, and New York's agricultural industry overall.

Elmira, N.Y., September 6—The state's Farm Laborers Wage Board late today approved its final recommendation to roll back the current 60-hour-per-week overtime threshold for farm workers to 40 hours in a move strongly criticized by State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C-Big

Flats).

The three-member Wage Board, by a vote of 2-1, handed down its final recommendation during a virtual meeting. Board member David Fisher, President of the New York Farm Bureau, voted against it.

Governor Kathy Hochul now has 45 days to either approve or reject the board's recommendation.

O'Mara, who over the past three years has been a strong critic of the Wage Board and its move to lower the overtime threshold, again urged Hochul to put a stop to the misguided action.

O'Mara said, "The Wage Board has been moving in this direction from the start and now Governor Hochul has the opportunity to finally reject it. She should listen to the thousands of farmers, farm workers, farm advocates, agricultural representatives, community leaders, and legislators, including me, in near-unanimous opposition. The message has been delivered from the industry's top advocates, including the New York Farm Bureau, the Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Grow NY Farms, and numerous others. Local, federal, and state representatives have made it known that we fear the undermining of an industry and, equally important, a way of life that has defined the regions we represent. If left to stand, it will change the face of New York State agriculture as we have known it for generations. It will risk the future of high quality, local food production. It will spark the loss of more family farms and the livelihoods these farms support across the industry and throughout hundreds of local economies. Now is no time to risk regulating and mandating an even more uncertain future for family farmers, farm workers, farm communities, and New York's agricultural industry overall."

O'Mara testified before the Board in January to express his strong opposition to lowering the threshold and has continued to speak out against it since then. [View O'Mara's January 20, 2022 testimony [HERE](#)]

In 2019, he strongly opposed the legislation, known as the "Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act," creating the Wage Board when it was enacted by then-Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Democrat-led majorities in the Senate and Assembly.