



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'MARA BLASTS STATE'S DECISION TO LOWER OVERTIME THRESHOLD FOR FARM WORKERS

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 1, 2022

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At the worst possible time, Governor Hochul is mandating an even more uncertain future for family farmers, farm workers, farm communities, and New York's agricultural industry overall.

Elmira, N.Y., October 1—State Senator Tom O'Mara blasted a decision by state Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon to approve a controversial recommendation lowering the overtime threshold for farm workers in New York State from 60 to 40 hours.

Reardon handed down her decision to approve the recommendation late Friday.

A three-member Farm Wage Board, by a vote of 2-1, handed down its final recommendation to lower the threshold during a virtual meeting on September 6.

Board member David Fisher, President of the New York Farm Bureau, voted against it.

Governor Kathy Hochul, together with Reardon, had 45 days to either approve or reject the board's recommendation.

O'Mara has been a strong opponent of the Farm Wage Board since voting against the legislation creating it in 2019, when it was enacted by then-Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Democrat-led majorities in the Senate and Assembly.

O'Mara said, "Governor Hochul and her Cuomo-appointed labor commissioner had the opportunity to choose the future of farming over the so-called 'progressive' ideology that is driving this state into the ground. They have rejected thousands of farmers, farm workers, farm advocates, agricultural representatives, community leaders, and legislators, including me, who have spoken in near-unanimous opposition to this move. They have rejected the industry's top advocates, including the New York Farm Bureau, the Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Grow NY Farms, and numerous others. They have decided to undermine an industry and a way of life that has defined the regions we represent. 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. At the worst possible time, Governor Hochul is mandating an even more uncertain future for family farmers, farm workers, farm communities, and New York's agricultural industry overall. Add it to the long and growing list of terrible, politically motivated decisions by this governor."

