

Thank you for being here. Thank you to Doug Couchon and to the community organization that he co-founded, People for a Healthy Environment, for their careful research and information sharing that has helped us understand how folks in Chemung County are getting used as the dumping ground for carcinogenic waste that no one else wants near them.

Three days ago, Governor Cuomo signed a law that ends a special rule just for the oil and gas industry, from having its waste classified as hazardous. I applaud Governor Cuomo for finally making the industry play by the same rule that everyone else does. This has been a long time coming, and Chemung County neighbors right near us here have suffered terribly from cancer. Senator O'Mara, just weeks ago, was the sole vote against this bill.

Back in 2005, when now-Senator Tom O'Mara was Chemung County Attorney, his law firm's client, Casella Waste Systems, through its subsidiary, was granted a deal to lease the landfill here from the county. Over the years, the company has received permission to exponentially increase the volume of waste imported from Pennsylvania, and to reroute county waste to other landfills in order to be able to fit in more of the carcinogenic waste.

Meanwhile, over the years, Tom O'Mara was elected Assemblyman, and then Senator. In addition to his positions as an elected representative of the people, Mr. O'Mara continues a side-job practicing law at his firm, which has changed names several times and is now called Barclay Damon, a law & lobbying firm with a history of working for corporate polluters.

From the days twenty years ago when his law firm's client was granted this sweet deal with Chemung County, to now, when Mr. O'Mara votes on the legislative floor for bills that will help the exact same polluting corporations his law firm works for — Mr. O'Mara has trampled on the health and safety of our children, families, and farmers.

As a Senator, since 2011, Mr. O'Mara voted over and over to kill the bill to ban companies from dumping fracking waste here.

As a Senator, Mr. O'Mara also voted against making the oil and gas industry classify their waste by the same rules that every other industry has to use, so that radioactive oil and gas waste would not be called "hazardous."

During the same ten years, he has simultaneously held a side-job at the lobbying firm representing one of the companies impacted by this legislation -- Casella Waste Systems.

As Chairman of the Environmental Conservation Committee, Mr. O'Mara shut down the public's access to subpoenas that -- once they were finally disclosed to the public -- showed that his lobbying firm's client was putting radioactive waste into New York waterways.

Let me be clear -- Mr. O'Mara's law firm's clients benefit directly from Mr. O'Mara's votes on the Senate floor - votes that put cancer-causing chemicals into his constituents' land.

We here today are very glad that Governor Cuomo has rejected Mr. O'Mara's polluted politics, and -- even though O'Mara was still was the lone vote against it mere weeks ago -- signed a law stopping this special treatment for corporate polluters.

But that doesn't fix the 20 years of dumping in the landfill right behind us; it doesn't remove the radioactive waste that could leak out anytime; it doesn't end the cancer for the neighbors right next door to us here.

And most of all, it doesn't end a system in New York that lets hired guns for corporate polluters also serve as elected representatives voting on the laws.

The fact is, we've been dumped on too long, and in too many ways. And if our State Senator insists on taking a paycheck from these corporate polluters instead of protecting our health, it's time we dump him from office, permanently.