



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Patty Ritchie

Standing Up for Oswego Jobs: Ritchie WINS Ok for Nuke Tax Bill

PATTY RITCHIE June 11, 2014

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State Senator Patty Ritchie beat back a challenge by downstate nuclear power opponents and won final legislative passage of her bill allowing Oswego County to continue to negotiate tax agreements with the operators of three nuclear power plants, helping to stabilize local government finances and protect jobs at some of the region's biggest employers.

The bill (S. 6660-A) extends for 15 years a state law that has allowed the county and school districts to enter into multi-year agreements on property tax payments by the plant operators, providing stability for local budgets as well as the operating companies' bottom lines. The law, originally enacted in 2001, was

set to expire next year.

“Oswego County’s nuclear plants not only provide reliable, cheap energy to help fuel our state’s economy, they are major employers in the county and region, and passage of this bill helps to protect the plants’ futures, and the future of jobs in Central New York,” Senator Ritchie said.

Opponents said the bill amounted to special treatment for the nuclear plant operators and urged its defeat. But Senator Ritchie countered that passage of the bill was essential to protecting jobs.

“Those jobs at the three nuclear facilities are sought-after jobs, they are high-paying—there’s a line of people looking to get in there. Not only does this bill help local communities stabilize their tax rate, it also helps protect those hundreds of jobs that are in Oswego County,” Senator Ritchie said.

The three nuclear plants each annually pay tens of millions of dollars in property taxes to Oswego County and local school districts, funding classrooms, activities and vital local government services. Expiration of the law would inevitably have led to costly and time-consuming lawsuits over tax rates and threatened local jobs both at the plants and in the surrounding communities.

The bill impacts operators of all six nuclear plants in New York State—which, together, produce as much as one-third of the state’s electricity—but was a priority for Oswego County officials. The measure was cosponsored by the county’s two Assembly representatives, Will Barclay and Bob Oaks.

The bill was sent to the Governor, the last stop before it can become law.