



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Focusing on Fishing in New York State

PATTY RITCHIE August 3, 2015

| ISSUE: **RECREATION AND TOURISM, HUNTING AND FISHING**

Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

From the mighty muskellunge to the beautiful brook trout—which is also our official state fish—New York is home to a wide variety of fish, 165 different species to be exact. It's these fish that inhabit the 7,500 lakes and ponds, as well as 50,000 miles of rivers and streams that make the Empire State a world-class destination for anglers of all skill levels.

These recreational opportunities not only “hook” anglers on fishing in New York State, they also play a significant role in our economy. When anglers visit our lakes, rivers and streams, they boost our bottom line and create jobs by spending money in our locally-owned shops, dining in our restaurants and staying in our hotels. In fact, according to a recent study, sport fishing in the Lake Ontario region, including the St. Lawrence River, accounts for \$80 million per-year in direct spending by anglers.

I know how important it is to support our region's fishing industry and encourage its growth. That's why I recently announced \$150,000 in special funding to help boost tourism by promoting fishing tournaments throughout Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties. This funding will help to support more than a dozen tournaments throughout our region and builds upon \$150,000 I secured last year for the same purpose. Included in the total funding was \$50,000 for the Evan Williams Bourbon Bassmaster Elite at the St. Lawrence River, which took place last week in Waddington and drew thousands of people to our region.

Delivering funding to ensure the success of local tournaments is just one way I'm working to encourage more people to cast their lines and explore the many opportunities for fishing our region has to offer. Just this year, the Senate demonstrated its commitment to protecting the environment by increasing funding for the Environmental Protection Fund by \$15 million over last year to help promote conservation of open spaces, protect wildlife habitats and improve natural resources. In addition, \$173 million in funding was also included to improve state parks, many of which offer spectacular opportunities for fishing.

Time after time, waterways across our region have been named among the top destinations for fishing in the world. An angler myself, it's a priority for me to work to help continue to put the North Country on the map as the place to be when it comes to outdoor recreation. To learn more about the work I'm doing to encourage the growth of our state's fishing industry and improve opportunities for anglers, visit my website at www.ritchie.nysenate.gov