



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Little opposes sale of wine in grocery stores

BETTY LITTLE January 13, 2009

Writes governor with concern for smaller “mom and pop” liquor stores

State Senator Betty Little has written a letter to Governor David A. Paterson asking that his administration withdraw an executive budget proposal that would permit the sale of wine in grocery, convenience and drug stores.

Little said she is concerned liquor stores in the North Country would lose a large percentage of their sales, forcing some to lay off employees or close.

In a letter to the governor, Little wrote: “Representing more than 70 liquor stores in the 45th Senate District, my concern is for their sustainability. Permitting the sale of wine in grocery, convenience and drug stores will draw consumers away from these smaller businesses. Grocery stores, particularly the large ones, have a tremendous buying power advantage.

“Selling wine at a lower price will no doubt attract consumers to these large retailers and away from the smaller “mom and pop” liquor stores.”

Little also expressed concern that cheaper wines produced in other regions of the world would likely sell better in grocery stores than New York wines. Limited shelf space would favor high-profit margin, non-New York based wines.

She added that there is a legitimate question whether the State Liquor Authority (SLA) could manage the additional responsibility of issuing more liquor licenses and ensuring compliance with state laws and regulations.

“Hundreds of businesses over the past several years have contacted my office frustrated by the SLA’s notoriously slow liquor license approval process.”

The governor has 30 days following the December 16, 2008, announcement of his executive budget to amend the proposal. Following that, the Legislature will work with the governor to negotiate any additional changes before enacting the budget, which is due April 1.