



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Bill Slashing Farm Red Tape Gets Committee Okay

PATTY RITCHIE June 2, 2011

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Measure Cuts Taxes, Fees, Overregulation; Top Priority of NY Farmers

A bill that slashes red tape, taxes and fees on New York's hardworking farmers—and is a top priority of the state's farm communities—was today approved by the Senate Agriculture Committee and sent to the full Senate for action.

The “Farmers Regulatory Relief Act” (S.4340), sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie, targets some of the most onerous taxes, fees and regulations that make it tougher for New York farmers to succeed.

“Family farmers are key to the economies of rural communities throughout New York, and helping agriculture thrive will provide a boost for our entire state economy,” said Sen. Ritchie, chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

“This bill, crafted with the help of farmers, eliminates crushing taxes, ever-increasing fees and endless paperwork that stifles these small businesses, and makes sure that farmers spend less time pushing a pencil, so that they can spend more time working their fields, farms and businesses,” Senator Ritchie said.

The bill is sponsored by Agriculture Committee Chairman Bill Magee in the Assembly, where it has more than three dozen cosponsors from both sides of the political aisle. It is “strongly supported” by the New York Farm Bureau, farmers' leading, statewide advocacy group.

It passed the Senate Agriculture Committee with unanimous, bipartisan support.

Key provisions of the bill include:

Refundable Investment Tax Credit—Encourages investments in farms and equipment to encourage young farmers, in particular, to invest and grow their businesses;

Exemption from Winery Reporting Requirements—Eliminates certain paperwork requirements for the fast-growing farm winery industry;

Partnership Fee Changes—Cuts costs for farmers by changing the way that certain fees are calculated, allowing them to deduct business expenses;

MTA Payroll Tax Exemption—Exempts farmers on Long Island and in the Hudson Valley from payroll taxes and farm vehicle plate surcharges that are solely used to fund NYC mass transit;

Highway Use Tax Clarification—Exempts rental vehicles, such as those used during harvest time, from road use taxes that normally don't apply to farmers;

Reduction in Ag Plate Registration Fees—Repeals the 2009 increase in farm vehicle registration fees;

Pollution Control Permit Fee Amendment—Creates a lower, set fee for farm pollution control (SPDES) permits, replacing the much higher, sliding scale;

Ag District Land Public Hearing Notification—Requires notice to all landowners within the boundaries of a proposed agricultural district when new properties are being added.