



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## **Ritchie Wants Sportsmen to Give the Gift of the Outdoors**

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### **Senate-passed Bill Would Create Hunting and Fishing Gift Cards**

State Senator Patty Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton) announced Senate passage today of her bill to create hunting and fishing “gift cards,” which would allow sportsmen to give the gift of the outdoors and help promote recreation in Upstate New York.

Senator Ritchie’s bill, S.5161, directs the state DEC to create the cards, which would be available in different denominations and could be used to pay for hunting and fishing licenses, stamps and other fees.

“Gift cards are an increasingly popular way for New Yorkers to remember birthdays, holidays and special occasions,” Senator Ritchie said. “What better way to introduce a child or grandchild to the outdoors, create a uniquely personal gift for a friend or co-worker, or give an incentive to a former sportsmen to get back into outdoor

recreation that to create an easy way to share this gift?”

Senator Ritchie said that, by making it easier to encourage outdoor recreation, her bill would also stimulate the economies of small towns and communities that rely on seasonal hunting and fishing, and the tourism dollars they generate.

It's estimated the hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation generate between \$3 billion and \$6 billion in economic activity for New York State each year. Outdoor recreation and tourism are especially important Upstate, and in communities that comprise the 48th Senate District counties of Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence.

“Particularly in our part of the state, outdoor recreation is an important part of our way of life, and a tradition that families have handed down for generation,” Senator Ritchie said. “These hunting and fishing gift cards can be a visible way to share our love of the outdoors with those we care about, and continue that great tradition.”

New York already issues gift cards for camping, but they are only available by phone and at certain state campgrounds. Senator Ritchie's bill would encourage the sale of outdoor gift cards over the Internet and at retail stores.

The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assembly member Aileen Gunther, who is the chair of the Legislature's Sportsmen's Caucus. Senator Ritchie is also a member of that group.