



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## **‘Trade Zone’ Expansion Means Jobs for St. Lawrence County**

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State Senator Patty Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton) said that a bill she cosponsored with Sen. Joseph A. Griffo to expand the Ogdensburg Foreign Trade Zone to include all of St. Lawrence County, which was signed into law today by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, will help create jobs by making the North Country a gateway to overseas companies and global commerce.

Sen. Ritchie’s bill expands Foreign Trade Zone No. 118 from its present 70 acres located at the Port of Ogdensburg to include businesses in Massena, Canton, Potsdam, Gouverneur and communities throughout the county, creating the largest FTZ geographically in New York—a whopping 2,821 square miles.

“With the only US port on the St. Lawrence Seaway, Ogdensburg and St. Lawrence County are uniquely positioned to lure foreign businesses who are looking to import or trans-ship products to Canada, the Midwest and beyond,” Senator Ritchie said.

“By expanding our Foreign Trade Zone countywide, we can increase the opportunity for foreign companies to do business in St. Lawrence County, increase demand for shipping and storage, and create the possibility for new manufacturing operations—all of which translates into more jobs.”

“New York is rethinking its policies on economic development and job creation to produce results, and the expansion of the Foreign Trade Zone meshes perfectly with Gov. Cuomo’s plan to adopt a more regional approach to job creation,” said Sen. Griffo, referring to the Governor’s creation of Regional Councils, including a seven-county North Country Regional Council.

Products shipped, stored and manufactured in Foreign Trade Zones receive special treatment from US Customs rules that ordinarily require shippers to pay upfront duties and extra taxes, and it can also save companies on shipping costs for raw materials that can be manufactured or assembled closer to their final destinations in the US or abroad.

Since 2008, the Ogdensburg FTZ—one of 12 such zones located throughout the state—was responsible for the movement of products valued at more than \$500 million, according to reports from the US Foreign Trade Zone Board, which oversees the program for the US Commerce Department.

The expansion still needs the approval of the federal board before it becomes fully effective. Both Sens. Ritchie and Griffo said they anticipated no difficulty in gaining that approval.

But Sen. Ritchie is wasting no time, and plans to invite Canadian leaders to tour St. Lawrence County for possible business expansion locations.

“Canada has been America’s and St. Lawrence County’s single largest trading partner for two centuries. If we want to grow our economy, we can’t let our assets continue to be the best kept secret on the border,” Senator Ritchie said.

The Ritchie-Griffo FTZ expansion bill, S.5225, was sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Addie Russell.