



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Wants Public Forum on Eee

PATTY RITCHIE September 1, 2011

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### **Infected St. Lawrence Co. Horse is Latest Incident of Disease That Claimed Child**

State Senator Patty Ritchie is again calling on state officials for answers after a St. Lawrence County horse reportedly died from the same mosquito-borne illness that had claimed the life of a four-year-old Oswego County girl.

Senator Ritchie has written to the state's top health, agriculture and environmental officials to ask about testing and plans to spray against mosquitoes that carry Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus.

And she announced that she has invited the chair of the Senate's powerful Health Committee to join her in a public forum to get answers on the government's response to the disease, which seems to disproportionately impact farms and communities in Central and Northern New York.

"News of an EEE-infected horse in St. Lawrence County confirms our worst fear that the virus has not remained confined to Oswego County," Senator Ritchie wrote, adding that standing pools of water remaining from Hurricane Irene can be expected to add to the population of potentially disease-carrying mosquitoes.

"This crisis demands the highest level, coordinated response from public health officials and others who hold high office in state government. I am therefore expanding my request for information about steps that the state is taking to track the virus throughout the region and

further prevent its spread through spraying and other measures.”

“In particular, I would like you to provide information concerning your plans to monitor the disease. To what extent has spraying been undertaken to prevent the spread of mosquitoes in St. Lawrence County? What steps will now be taken?” Senator Ritchie wrote.

Last month, four-year-old Maggie Wilcox died from EEE, the fifth human fatality since the disease emerged in New York in 1971. All of them were in Central New York.

This week, state officials learned that a horse, infected with the disease, was euthanized on Aug. 22. It was at least the second horse to die of EEE in the region this year.

Senator Ritchie’s letter can be viewed at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/63730780/EEE-followup>