



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Senate Passes Two Ritchie Bills to Cut Red Tape for Farms

PATTY RITCHIE January 30, 2012

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Eases Regulations On Maple Sugar Houses, Woodlot Pastures

Senator Patty Ritchie today continued her efforts to cut red tape on family farmers by winning unanimous approval by the Senate of two bills that aim to ease the rules on agriculture, often described as the nation's most heavily regulated industry.

The first bill, S.3542, would include maple sugar houses and production facilities under the definition of agricultural buildings, breaking down impediments to allowing the public to visit them on agribusiness tours and helping to grow New York's maple products industry.

A second bill, S.5160, would insure that farmers who raise livestock on wooded acreage are treated the same as other agricultural operations.

"Central and Northern New York has many small farms that are working hard to develop new agribusinesses like producing maple syrup and looking at new ways to expand the use of their property to raise livestock," said Senator Ritchie, who is the chair of the Senate's Agriculture Committee.

"I've been working with a lot of small farm owners to reduce government regulations that make it more difficult for these family farms to succeed."

New York is currently ranked second in maple syrup production, after Vermont. Senator Ritchie's bill allows maple sugar facilities to be defined as agricultural buildings, a move that helps farmers to bring visitors to tour them as an agri-tourism activity.

The practice of using woodlands for raising livestock is known as "silvopasturing," a scientifically-based, ecologically-sound practice which allows farmers to manage timber resources and pastures as an integrated resource.

Last year, Senator Ritchie sponsored five new laws that cut red tape on family farms and agribusinesses. The woodlots bill is sponsored by Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Bill Magee, while the maple bill is sponsored by Assembly member Bob Reilly. Both bills were sent to the Assembly.

Copies of the bills can be found below.