



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Two Ritchie Outdoors Bills Passed by Senate

PATTY RITCHIE February 29, 2012

| ISSUE: **RECREATION AND TOURISM, HUNTING AND FISHING**

Two bills sponsored by State Senator Patty Ritchie that are aimed at helping New Yorkers enjoy the outdoors were approved by the Senate Wednesday.

The first was a bill that would allow owners of UTV's, also known as "double-wides" and "side-by-sides," to legally register them for use in the state (S. 3318).

"By failing to allow UTV registrations, New York is turning away a growing and important segment of our outdoor recreation and tourism trade, and costing businesses that depend on tourism money and jobs," Senator Ritchie said.

"More and more, couples want to explore the outdoors together, and do so in the comfort and convenience that these vehicles provide. But in order to operate them legally, owners are heading out of state, sending their tourism and recreation dollars elsewhere when our communities need them here."

"This bill tells tourists that we welcome them to explore and enjoy New York's outdoors."

Senator Ritchie's bill would accommodate side-by-sides by increasing the maximum weight allowed for ATVs to 1500 pounds, from the current 1000-pound limit. The bill is supported by major sportsmen's groups.

The second bill (S.5561) would direct the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation to offer for sale hunting and fishing "gift cards."

"Allowing New Yorkers to give the gift of our wonderful outdoors will help bring more people out to enjoy our rivers and lakes and the other wonders of Northern and Central New York," Senator Ritchie said. "New York State already allows people to purchase gift cards for camping permits and admission to State Parks. This bill will expand that program to include hunting, fishing, trapping and other outdoors fees, will introduce more New Yorkers to outdoor recreation, and increase the numbers of hunters and fishermen in our state."

The gift cards bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assembly Member Aileen Gunther, who is the chair of the joint Senate and Assembly Sportsmen's Caucus. Senator Ritchie is also a member of that panel.

The UTV bill is sponsored by Central New York Assemblyman Bill Magee.

Both bills were sent to the Assembly.