



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Governor's Budget Includes Welcome News for Farmers

Patty Ritchie

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Ritchie Applauds Governor's Support for Upstate Agriculture

State Senator Patty Ritchie is applauding Governor Cuomo's continued commitment to New York State's agriculture industry and Upstate farming as evidenced in the Executive Budget proposal outlined on Tuesday.

"Here in New York State our hardworking farmers are the backbone of our workforce and agriculture is the cornerstone of our economy," said Senator Ritchie.

"I am pleased that Governor Cuomo is recognizing the important—and critical—role agriculture plays. His funding of agriculture in the Executive Budget proposal sends a message that this industry is a key part of our efforts to revitalize New York State's economy."

Included in the agriculture portion of the Governor's spending plan are the following programs:

- Pro Dairy: \$822,000

- FreshConnect Farmers Market Program: \$450,000
- Farm Viability Institute: \$400,000
- Farm Family Assistance: \$384,000
- New York Wine and Grape Foundation: \$713,000
- Apple Growers Association: \$206,000
- Future Farmers of America: \$192,000
- Cornell Rabies Program, which also serves Northern New York: \$50,000
- Program to increase availability for locally grown hops to support growing craft brew industry: \$40,000

The \$40,000 allocated to help increase the availability for locally grown hops builds on Senator Ritchie's efforts to foster the growth of New York State's craft brewery industry. Recently, Senator Ritchie sponsored legislation, signed into law by Governor Cuomo, which recognizes "Farm Breweries" and cuts taxes and red tape to help create jobs and give New York an edge in this growing industry.

In addition, the Governor also unveiled funding for several proposals to help market New York products, including his "Taste-NY" initiative, which will create duty-free "Taste-NY" stores across the state, offering New York food and drink.

In the coming weeks, Senator Ritchie plans to study the budget in detail and work with her colleagues to achieve goals of strengthening the bottom line for farmers, rebuilding agriculture-related jobs and revitalizing the industry as a whole.

Senator Ritchie is also especially interested in finding ways to provide relief for farmers impacted by last year's unusual storm patterns as well as other programs that promote products that are unique to New York.

Throughout her first term in office, Senator Ritchie fought to restore funding for critical agriculture programs after they were cut by 90 percent prior to her becoming Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

As Chair, Senator Ritchie has made it a priority to support and grow the agriculture industry through cutting red tape, lowering taxes, creating agriculture related employment opportunities and expanding markets for farmers—including encouraging New York State and local governments to purchase more locally grown and manufactured food products.