



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Statement on the 2013 Legislative Session

PATTY RITCHIE June 22, 2013

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As State Senator, my top priority has been making Central and Northern New York a better place to live and work, and this year's session continues our progress.

With the adoption of a Middle Class-friendly state budget, we once again held the line on state spending, and provided urgently needed tax relief for the Middle Class.

We continued to invest in jobs by approving a third round of Regional Economic Development grants.

We increased our commitment to public education with the largest school aid package in four years, one that was weighted to rural and Upstate schools and provides \$25 million more than last year in education aid to districts in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties.

Because of the importance of farming to our region's economy, we made agriculture a top priority. The state budget included key elements from my "Grown in New York" plan, including restored funding for vital marketing and research programs from apples to dairy and maple.

The Legislature adopted my bill to finally rein in runaway agriculture land tax assessments, and an innovative new plan to increase sales of locally grown foods, and the Senate advanced my ideas, like estate tax relief and Farm Savings Accounts, to help save family farms and encourage more young people to choose agriculture as a career.

We must continue to build on all these accomplishments, and continue to find ways to grow our economy, cut taxes and create jobs, and I will be spending the summer months listening to the ideas of constituents that can lead us to those goals.

### Highlights of 2013 Senate Session

#### **Helping New York's Middle Class**

Maintaining Middle Class tax rates that are the lowest in 60 years

\$350 Family Tax Relief rebates, beginning in 2014

Record investment in STAR property tax relief program

Cutting electric bills by phase out of the 2009 energy surcharge

### **Growing Jobs in NYS**

Third round of Regional Economic Development awards, totaling \$220 million. CNY and NNY were recipients of job-creating awards in both round one and two.

“START UP-NY” plan to attract new jobs by creating tax-free zones on SUNY campuses. The final bill was modified to include solid anti-compete protections for existing businesses, increase local oversight and cap tax-exempt benefits.

### **Lending a Hand to NY’s Family Farms**

The 2% tax cap bill I sponsored passed both houses and farmers can expect land tax savings upon the Governor’s signature.

An innovative new plan will connect state prisons, hospitals and agencies directly with New York farmers to boost purchases of locally produced foods, bringing better nutrition and boosting farmers’ bottom lines.

I sponsored a soon-to-be law to boost production and sales of cider products by New York farmers. The bill is modeled on successful measures that have helped propel New York’s farm winery, distillery and craft brewing sectors.

### **Supporting Learning in Central and Northern New York**

Largest one-year increase in aid to public schools—5.6% to 48th Senate District schools

Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence County schools receive an increase of more than \$25 million, that’s more than \$7 million more than in the Governor’s proposal

Changes to the state aid formula I sought drive more aid to rural and poorer Upstate districts