



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Senate Passes Ritchie-Griffo Utv Bill

PATTY RITCHIE June 16, 2014

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### **Measure Would Allow Side-by-Sides on NY Trails**

The State Senate gave approval today to a bill striking down New York's one-of-a-kind ban on popular side-by-side all-terrain vehicles. The measure is sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie and Joe Griffo.

The bill (S.1946-A) would raise the weight limit for ATVs to 1,500 pounds, from the current 1,000 pounds, an outdated limit that has prevented virtually all of the side-by-side units, known as UTVs, from being legally used on trails in the state.

A companion bill in the State Assembly has been moving through committees, and could come to a vote later this week, before the scheduled end of this year's legislative session. The bill is currently in the Ways and Means Committee.

"State leaders are going all out to encourage New Yorkers to explore the great outdoors, but outdated laws prevent them from using UTVs that are wildly popular in every other state in the nation, to visit the ever-increasing network of trails that are being designed and built especially for these vehicles," Senator Ritchie said.

"As a result, state and local governments are losing out on millions of dollars in sales tax and registration revenue, small business owners are losing out on tens of millions of tourist dollars that could be spent at gas stations, restaurants and hotels, and New Yorkers are losing out on an opportunity to explore and enjoy our great outdoors," Senator Ritchie said.

"New York is giving mixed messages to outdoor enthusiasts. On the one hand, we advertise heavily to promote the wonderful opportunities in the Tug Hill Region and north country. On the other, we're

discouraging use of UTVs, which are very popular with older riders. It's past time we started giving tourists a consistent message: New York's trails are open for business - and we'd love for you to buy, register and enjoy your side-by-side here," said Senator Joseph A. Griffo, R-Rome.

Under the bill, only UTVs that hold up to three riders, properly equipped with seat belts and other safety equipment, would be allowed on trails. The Assembly sponsor insisted that the popular four-seaters would continue to be banned, even if they met the 1,500 pound weight requirement.