



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Calls on Governor to Re-Open Hastings Rest Area, Add “Taste NY” Store

PATTY RITCHIE October 16, 2014

| ISSUE: [AGRICULTURE](#), [ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT](#), [TRANSPORTATION](#), [DAIRY](#)



Request Comes As Governor Proposes Expansion of “Taste NY” Initiative

As Governor Cuomo works to expand “Taste NY”—a program designed to highlight locally grown and produced food and products—Senator Ritchie is urging the placement of a Taste NY retail store at the now-closed Hastings rest area on I-81.

The request comes after the Governor this week proposed an expansion of Taste NY, setting goals to add Taste NY retail stores in strategic locations and triple gross sales of participating vendors in the coming year. In her letter to Governor Cuomo, Senator Ritchie suggests reopening the rest area between exits 32

and 31, which has sat vacant since 2010 and adding a Taste NY retail location in an effort to welcome visitors and highlight local products.

“Heavily traveled by local residents as well as a significant number of Canadian shoppers going to and from Syracuse, I-81 would be a great location for featuring items grown and produced locally including wine, craft beer, maple syrup, fresh produce such as apples and onions, dairy products and so much more,” said Senator Ritchie in her letter.

“Reopening the Hastings rest area—which is located between exits 32 and 31 and has sat vacant since 2010—and adding a Taste NY retail store would serve to provide a place for drivers to take a break during long stretches of travel or inclement weather, while at the same time, welcoming visitors and serving to feature locally grown and produced items,” she added.

Recently while on a tour of agricultural operations across the state, Senator Ritchie visited a Taste NY retail store on the Taconic State Parkway in the Hudson Valley. It’s estimated that this year, gross sales of New York products from Taste NY stores and events have totaled an estimated \$1.5 million.

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Ritchie has been working to grow our state’s largest industry through new initiatives that support New York’s hardworking farmers and encourage more young people to pursue agriculture-related careers. Most recently, two components of Senator Ritchie’s “Young Farmers NY” program were launched, which include more than \$600,000 in grants as well as a loan forgiveness program, both aimed at helping young farmers overcome obstacles and giving them a greater opportunity for a successful career in agriculture.