



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Hold the Line! Senator Ritchie Calls Constituents to Speak Out on Latest Plan to Split 315 Area Code

PATTY RITCHIE June 19, 2015

| ISSUE: **TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INTERNET, WIRELESS, CELL PHONES, LANDLINES**



State Senator Patty Ritchie is calling out to residents of Central and Northern New York to be heard on the latest effort by state regulators to create a new area code for parts of the region now covered by 315.

Senator Ritchie has created an online survey and comment form on her website to measure her constituents' support for various plans that have been floated by the state Public Service Commission, which says the region could run out of available phone numbers in 2017.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE SURVEY AND ADD YOUR COMMENTS](#) (external link)

The two options include splitting the region—which includes Oswego, Jefferson, St. Lawrence and 15 other counties—into two, or creating Upstate’s first area code “overlay,” where only new phones would be assigned the second code. That plan would force every phone customers to use 10- or 11-digit dialing to call across the street or across the country.

A third option would be to do nothing at all, as the PSC elected in 2013, the last time it weighed creating a new code. At that time, Senator Ritchie led a chorus of critics who said the new code wasn’t needed and the PSC agreed to delay the change, and search for ways to stretch the number of still-available phone numbers.

“Two years ago, residents and business of Northern and Central New York told regulators to hang up their plans for a new area code, but they’re back again—for a fifth time since 1999—warning us that the end is near,” Senator Ritchie said.

“I’ve raised concerns in the past that a new area code isn’t a simple fix, and it will create confusion, expense to small business and may not even be necessary, and I’ve urged the PSC to search for other ways to meet growing demand for phone numbers,” Senator Ritchie said.

[CLICK HERE TO READ SENATOR RITCHIE'S 2013 LETTER TO THE PSC](#)

Senator Ritchie’s survey asks consumers if they support creation of a new area code, and to select which option they would prefer. It also asks, if a new area code is created, would area residents want to join the new area, or keep the same 315 area code that’s served the region since 1947.

Senator Ritchie will share the survey results and comments with the PSC before it makes its final decision.

According to regulators, each area code includes about 8 million available phone numbers, or about 4-1/2 times the number of men, women and children who live in the 18-county, 315 region. According to regulators, there are 34 “exchanges”—denoted by the first three digits in a phone number—that have yet to be assigned in the 315 area, accounting for more than 300,000 still unused numbers.

[The PSC also is accepting comments directly on its area code plan, Case No. 07-C-1486, on the web.](#)

No date has been set for a final ruling by the regulators.