



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Announces Major Step Forward in 'Point Airy' Plan for New Jobs and Growth at St. Lawrence Psych Center

PATTY RITCHIE September 28, 2015

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State Officials Seeking Companies for Long-term Investment in Property

State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing a major step forward in her plan to redevelop unused land at the state-owned St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center, encouraging job and economic growth and returning now-exempt properties to the tax rolls.

Senator Ritchie announced that two state agencies, the state Office of Mental Health and Department of Correctional and Community Services, have issued a formal "Request For Information" seeking companies to invest in upgrades and agree to operate a power-and-steam cogeneration on the site for two

decades or more.

The plant is critically important to the continued operation of the Psych Center, the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, and others on the campus—as well as the jobs of hundreds of employees who work at those facilities—and upgrades would not only help ensure the long-term stability of existing jobs, but would also make the site even more appealing to private developers seeking to create new ones. The current operator’s contract with the state expires in three years.

“For several years, I have been working with the city’s leaders and concerned workers at the facilities to get Albany to focus on the need for a long-term plan for the power plant and Psych Center campus,” said Senator Ritchie. “Now, with new leadership at the helm of the state OMH and the excitement that’s been created by my ‘Point Airy’ redevelopment plan, we are seeing the kind of movement that can make this plan a success.

“I want to applaud OMH Commissioner Dr. Ann Marie Sullivan and her staff for taking a serious look at this facility and recognizing the opportunity for making the Psych Center campus a center not only of excellent health care, but also an engine of economic growth for the entire North Country community.”

The agencies’ RFI asks companies to outline how they would improve the power plant, which now serves five state facilities, and operate it for 20 to 25 years. Some suggestions have included converting the plant to run on wood pellets, which would help the state meet its goal of reducing fossil fuel use, and also help create additional jobs in the region’s forest products industry.

“New York State is looking for the best deal for taxpayers. Companies now have an opportunity to compete to offer innovative ways to provide electricity and steam for the next 20 to 25 years for the agencies,” Senator Ritchie said. “That alone benefits the entire region, but as the centerpiece of the Point Airy redevelopment plan, the plant could become a catalyst for the creation of hundreds of new jobs on the site.”

Senator Ritchie’s Point Airy Plan, developed together with the city and St. Lawrence County IDA, would convert 160 acres of unused land at the Psych Center campus from state ownership to private developers. The parcels include one of the longest strips of undeveloped land alongside the majestic St. Lawrence River.

Senator Ritchie wrote and passed legislation in 2014 to begin the land transfer to the City of Ogdensburg on the first parcel. That bill was signed into law, and the city and state are currently in negotiations over the final transfer.

A copy of the state’s official RFI is available at the following link:

