



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## TAPPING INTO A GROWING INDUSTRY: MAPLE EXPERT JOINS RITCHIE, COLLEAGUES AT AG COMMITTEE MEETING

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\*\*\*WATCH VIDEO FROM TUESDAY'S MEETING HERE\*\*\*

In an effort to highlight New York State's growing maple industry, State Senator Patty Ritchie hosted nationally-recognized maple expert Stephen Childs of Cornell University at today's Senate Agriculture Committee Meeting. There, he shared with members information on new tools and research that are helping everyone from farmers to hobbyists be a part of

the maple sector's growth.

"Maple is 'on the move' here in New York State, with the industry seeing tremendous growth year after year," said Senator Ritchie.

"It's this growth that is helping to boost our agriculture economy, create jobs and of course, put sweet, local products on the tables of people all across New York State. I'd like to thank Steve for joining in today's meeting and sharing information with committee members that will help us continue to advocate for resources that will help the industry expand."

During the meeting, Childs shared information on new technology that's helping maple producers meet an even greater demand for their products, educational programs that are teaching children about maple production and research that's helping get more people involved in maple production. In his remarks, Childs explained that an increased demand for products that are natural and locally made are driving an expansion of the industry, which has doubled in size in the past ten years.

Today, New York is the nation's second largest producer of maple syrup—after Vermont—with 2.3 million taps—twice the number of 2009. Maple is a \$20 million industry in New York, with the state producing 18 percent of all maple syrup in the country. In addition, New York syrup production in 2015 reached its highest level in 70 years, according to the USDA.

In recent years, Senator Ritchie has been a leading voice for increasing support for New York's maple farmers. This year, she is working again to reverse cuts in funding for maple producers in both the Governor's and Assembly's budgets, with the Senate's spending plan fully restoring cuts to both the Maple Producers Association—which promotes the same of maple syrups and other products—and important research done by Cornell that's helping to

grow the industry. In the past five years, Senator Ritchie has successfully advocated for increasing funding for maple research and promotion by \$1.3 million. This year, she is looking to restore over \$300,000 in cuts included in the Executive Budget.

The visit by Childs comes in advance of New York's "Maple Weekends," which begin this Saturday and Sunday, and take place again on April 2nd and 3rd at more than 160 farms and other locations across the state, including nearly 30 events taking place within 75 miles of Watertown. For more information on Maple Weekend events, [click here](#).