



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Senate OK's Bills To Help Expand Markets For Farmers

PATTY RITCHIE May 1, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie is applauding the passage of two measures that will help expand markets for New York's hardworking farmers and provide the opportunity for consumers more easily enjoy fresh, healthy foods.

Under Senate bill 3015, which is sponsored by Senator Ritchie, hungry consumers would have the opportunity to use their electronic benefit transfer (EBT) to join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) market. By joining a CSA, customers can purchase local products, like meats and vegetables, directly from a local farmer.

“Today, several million New York State residents receive SNAP benefits,” said Senator Ritchie, who serves as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “Through this legislation, we can help provide a steady customer base for farmers, allowing them to invest in their farms, ensuring that consumers have regular deliveries of fresh, locally grown products.”

Also approved by the Senate today was a measure cosponsored by Senator Ritchie (Senate bill 428) that would help put more local foods in lunchrooms. The legislation increases the purchasing limit—from \$25,000 to \$150,000—allowed for school districts to buy from associations of ten or fewer producers, without seeking permission from the Department of Education. The measure was sent to the Assembly.

“When we put more local foods in our schools, we not only provide another opportunity for New York farmers to expand their markets into these institutions, we are also improving the health of growing students,” said Senator Ritchie. “This measure is just one more way to accomplish both of those goals.”

Support of these measures continues Senator Ritchie’s work to increase access to local foods as well as support for New York’s farmers. Just recently, she announced that the new state budget—for the third straight year—included record funding for agriculture totaling \$51 million.