

**DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER
FOR SENATE/ASSEMBLY RELATIONS**

CHAIR
SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

CHAIR
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL RESOURCES

**THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE
48TH DISTRICT
OSWEGO, JEFFERSON, ST. LAWRENCE COUNTIES**

COMMITTEES
ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE
CIVIL SERVICE & PENSIONS
CRIME VICTIMS, CRIME & CORRECTION
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM, PARKS &
RECREATION
ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS
FINANCE
HIGHER EDUCATION
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION

December 29, 2016

Ms. Kathleen D. Regan
Deputy Director, Planning
Adirondack Park Agency
1133 State Route 86
Ray Brook, NY 12977

Dear Ms. Regan:

I write to you to share my comments regarding the 2016 - 2017 Amendments to the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan and specifically, the classification of the Boreas Ponds Tract.

From snowmobiling and boating to hiking and snowshoeing, opportunities for outdoor recreation in New York State—and especially in places like Adirondack Park—are second to none. It's these activities that allow people of all ages, many of whom reside in my district, to experience the beauty of nature, take in the fresh air and get active. In addition, many of these activities are more than pastimes, they are time-honored traditions held by families and friends.

Equally as important is the fact that New York's natural resources and the opportunities they support for outdoor recreation are major drivers of our economy, generating billions of dollars annually, attracting tourists and creating jobs in communities throughout our state. For example, New York's fishing industry alone generates an estimated \$1.8 billion in economic activity annually and supports roughly 17,000 jobs. In addition, our state's 10,000 miles of snowmobile trails are responsible for supporting an economic impact of nearly \$900 million per year—\$245 million of which is infused into the Adirondack region.

With the Boreas Ponds Tract, New York State has a great opportunity to tap into the potential this land has for further increasing economic activity and attracting tourists, while at the same time preserving the beauty of this special region of the Empire State. I firmly believe that "Alternative 1," which would provide for a combination of Wild Forest and Wilderness classifications, would best achieve this goal.

REPLY TO: **ALBANY OFFICE:** ROOM 412 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247 (518) 455-3438
 JEFFERSON COUNTY OFFICE: 317 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 418, WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601 (315) 782-3418
 OSWEGO COUNTY OFFICE: 46 EAST BRIDGE STREET, FIRST FLOOR, OSWEGO, NEW YORK 13126 (315) 342-2057
 ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY OFFICE: 330 FORD STREET, OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK 13669 (315) 393-3024

E-MAIL: RITCHIE@NYSENATE.GOV

WEBSITE: RITCHIE.NYSENATE.GOV



Through Alternative 1, the state could strike a balance between promoting economic activity through outdoor recreation and protecting New York's natural beauty. As you are aware, the property was used in previous years for commercial purposes. As such, the land already has infrastructure—including over 50 miles of roads and bridges—that today could be used for snowmobiling, hiking, cycling and other outdoor activities by people of all ages and abilities. Should the state pursue other alternatives—namely classifying the property largely as Wilderness—many would be prevented from accessing the lands, namely families with children, the elderly, disabled individuals and others who are not able to walk long distances.

When Governor Cuomo announced the state's purchase of the Boreas Ponds Tract, he stated that the acquisition would benefit New Yorkers for generations to come, adding that "we are helping to conserve the region's natural beauty while also creating new economic opportunities for communities in the park." Through Alternative 1, we will be able to achieve a balance that ensures the property can be used for a variety of recreational purposes that help to support New York's economy and that its environmentally sensitive areas are protected.

As you prepare to make your recommendations for classification to the Governor, it is my hope that you will keep my views in mind. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty Ritchie". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "P" and a cursive "Ritchie".

Patty Ritchie
State Senator

PAR:svc