



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

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

- CHAIR**
SENATE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
- COMMITTEES**
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HIGHER EDUCATION
HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- MEMBER**
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON RURAL RESOURCES

August 15, 2011

Hon. Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner of Health
NYS Health Department
Corning Tower
Albany, NY 12237

Hon. Darrel J. Aubertine, Commissioner
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235

Hon. Joe Martens, Commissioner
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Commissioners:

The death this weekend of a preschooler who was infected with Eastern Equine Encephalitis marks the third such tragedy involving a resident of Oswego County since the disease appeared in New York State 40 years ago. Indeed, all five EEE-related deaths in the state since 1971 have occurred in Central New York.

Incidence of EEE has increased significantly in recent years, both among humans and livestock, and it appears the majority of these case are occurring in Oswego and surrounding counties. The disease appears most prevalent in August.

Recently, county health officials have identified additional ponds and wetland areas where EEE-infected mosquitoes are present. This finding represents an increased risk to nearby residents and livestock.

REPLY TO: □ **ALBANY OFFICE:** ROOM 815 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: WWW.RITCHIE.NYSENATE.GOV



In each of 2009 and 2010, local county health departments have conducted aerial spraying to reduce the number of disease-carrying mosquitoes but, reportedly, no spraying has been conducted this year.

While it is critical that individuals take precautions to protect themselves and their families from mosquitoes and insect-borne illness and disease, residents of Oswego County need to know that the state is effectively coordinating its response to this growing problem. I am writing to request a detailed explanation of steps that your agency is taking, or planning to take, to help counter the spread of EEE to animals and humans, particularly in light of the most recent tragedy.

Please include a description of your actions with regard to recommendations that you have made to local and county officials who are dealing directly with this problem, including financial and other assistance the state has provided to Oswego County with specific regard to this issue.

Please also be sure to let me know how I can assist you, either through legislation or other means, to address this urgent public health and agribusiness threat.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patty Ritchie". The signature is stylized with large loops and a cursive script.

Patty Ritchie
State Senator

cc: Senator Kemp Hannon, Chair, Senate Health Committee
Hon. Phil Church, Oswego County Administrator
Dr. Dennis Norfleet, Oswego County Director of Public Health