



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Betty Little

Little Bill Would Permit Local Review of State Residential Facilities

BETTY LITTLE April 20, 2009

Senator Betty Little is sponsoring legislation that would require state agencies to submit site plans of all state-owned residential facilities for local government review. The legislation would waive the state's immunity from city, town and village building code review and would apply to existing facilities and new construction.

Little said she introduced the bill in response to the tragic fire last month at the Riverview group home in Wells, New York that claimed four lives. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

"Local officials should have an opportunity to review and become familiar with the layout of these facilities," said Little. "It is the locals who respond first to emergencies. The goal is to help improve their effectiveness when fighting fires and evacuating residents.

"I also believe it doesn't hurt to have another set of eyes review these plans. It only makes sense to offer local inspectors the chance to take a look at the building plans to ensure the safest possible structures are built."

"I appreciate Senator Little's leadership in support of our local fire departments and EMS squads with legislation that will help guide these community based organizations who are ultimately responsible for the safety and well-being of those residing in state operated group

homes," said Town of Wells Supervisor Brian Towers.

"Local government's only concern with the current system of state inspection and oversight of state built facilities is the lack of local involvement in insuring that we provide adequate protection for all our citizens and this legislation moves us in that direction."

The legislation, S.4073, has seven cosponsors and has been referred to the Senate Cities Committee.