



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Chautauqua County Rifle Bill Passed

CATHARINE YOUNG August 8, 2011

**OLEAN-** Chautauqua joined 36 other upstate counties in allowing rifle hunting for big game deer and bear, when Governor Cuomo signed the legislation recently.

The bill authorizes rifle use south of Route 20 along the Lake Erie shoreline beginning this season. It was sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean), and Assemblymen Andrew Goodell (R,C-Chautauqua) and Joseph Giglio (R,C,I-Gowanda).

“Our outdoor sportsmen have enthusiastically supported this bill for many years. Although I previously passed it in the Senate during other sessions, it always stalled in the Assembly. Our representatives Andy Goodell and Joe Giglio did an effective job by finally getting it through their house. They are terrific advocates,” Senator Young said.

Rifle hunting for small game has been permissible in the county for many years, but big game was excluded and needed special legislation, according to the state legislators.

“Allowing Chautauqua sportsmen and women to use rifles makes great economic sense because many of them were leaving the county to hunt elsewhere. Now we can keep our hunters local and attract more visitors who will spend money at our local small businesses. Better controlling the deer population will reduce vehicle accidents, and lessen crop damage,” she said.

Insurance claims resulting from deer-vehicle collisions are approximately \$120 million annually in New York State. Deer damage to agricultural operations is estimated at \$75 million each year, Senator Young said.

“This is a common-sense approach that has received tremendous support from the sportsmen in Chautauqua County, including the hunting safety experts. The data from across the state indicates that hunting with a rifle is safer than using a shotgun. A rifle is much more accurate, the bullets are less likely to ricochet, and about one-third fewer shots typically are fired, as compared to a shotgun,” Assemblyman Goodell said.

Assemblyman Giglio said, “They sportsmen have waited a long time for this law. Chautauqua County was competing with Cattaraugus and Allegany counties for big game Southern Tier hunters. This legislation levels the playing field. I’ve supported this measure for many years, and I’m glad to be part of the solution.”

Reid Johnson, Chautauqua County Federation of Sportsmen President said “This has been a long time coming for our county. It will give us another avenue to get more youth involved in our sport, in a safe way. Now we can get outdoor sportsmen back here in Chautauqua County where we have some of the best hunting in the state.”

The new law took effect immediately and will sunset December 31, 2012. The state legislature must vote to extend it at that time.

Assemblymen Goodell and Giglio said it is the Assembly’s policy to have a two year trial period for counties that are new to rifle hunting. All three state legislators said that if the trial period is

successful, they support making the law permanent.