



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie, Ag Commissioner Discuss Eee Funding

PATTY RITCHIE April 18, 2012

| ISSUE: **AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH**

| COMMITTEE: **AGRICULTURE**



State Budget Funds for Mosquito Control, Horse Vaccination to Help Stop Spread

State Senator Patty Ritchie met today with the state's Agriculture Commissioner, Darrel Aubertine, and discussed funding she secured in the budget to help fight EEE in Oswego County.

Commissioner Aubertine's Department of Agriculture and Markets is responsible for administering much of the \$150,000 in additional state funds that are targeted at the disease, which has claimed five human lives in Central New York—including that of 4-year-old Maggie Wilcox last summer—and untold numbers of horses and other large farm animals over the past four decades.

"The Commissioner and I agreed that we must do all we can to prevent any further loss of life from EEE, and that's why I wanted to discuss this additional funding to ensure that we are taking every step we can to win the fight against EEE in Oswego County and Central New York," Senator Ritchie said.

"I urged him to make this fight a priority, because it won't make much difference if we can't get the programs in place to fight EEE after summer—and biting mosquito season—is ended," Senator Ritchie said.

Senator Ritchie worked to include the funding in the budget to follow through on recommendations that were included in the report of her EEE Roundtable, held last Fall in the wake of Maggie's death.

Senator Ritchie gave the Commissioner a letter she's sending to Governor Cuomo that praises the state's response following Maggie's death, and urging him to continue to support efforts to stop EEE this year. A copy of that letter is attached.

Funds secured by Senator Ritchie include \$100,000 to assist Oswego and other Central New York counties impacted by EEE with the cost of aerial spraying for mosquito control , and an additional \$50,000 to provide low-cost vaccinations for horses, and make available to private landowners larvicide treatments to cut down on the population of infected mosquitoes.

That latter amount is expected to be controlled by Commissioner Aubertine's agency, and the department is expected to devise a program to implement the vaccination program and larvicide distribution.

Senator Ritchie also has been working with other state agencies, including the Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation, who are supporting Oswego County in its stepped up efforts to protect the public from EEE.