



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Asks Governor's Help for Frost-Blasted Farmers

PATTY RITCHIE May 3, 2012

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### **“One of the Worst” Disasters Ever Prompted by Early Spring Thaw**

State Senator Patty Ritchie, chair of the Senate's Agriculture Committee, today asked for Governor Cuomo to help New York farmers who suffered near total crop loss as a result of this Spring's early thaw and devastating late frost.

**\*\*\* READ SENATOR RITCHIE'S LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR BY CLICKING HERE \*\*\***

Senator Ritchie is asking the Governor to request a federal disaster declaration for impacted farmers, which include apple, grape and other fruit producers across Upstate New York. Most severely impacted have been the apple growing regions of Central and Western New York, and the grape growers along the Great Lakes, but also in Northern New York.

“As you know, our State's farmers have been subjected to a very severe frost event which has produced widespread damage across New York State,” Senator Ritchie said in a letter to the Governor.

“My office has been in contact with Commissioner Aubertine's office; James Barber, Executive Director of the USDA's Farm Service Agency, and NY Farm Bureau, and it is clear that the preliminary damage assessments indicate that this may be one of the worst statewide, multi-crop losses we have ever witnessed here in New York.”

She asked the Governor immediately to contact US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to request the declaration, which sets in motion a series of relief measures including low-interest loans and payments for damaged crops.

Senator Ritchie said that 80 degree weather in March caused many fruit trees and vines to bud far earlier than usual, making them especially vulnerable to the deep freeze of the past few weeks.

“While many of us welcomed the early start to Spring and Summer, I heard from farmers across Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, as well as throughout the state, that they had serious concerns about the weather's impact on their crops. Unfortunately, in many cases, their worst fears are now being realized

as some producers are seeing crop losses that could reach 100 percent,” Senator Ritchie said.

[Click here to see a copy of Senator Ritchie's letter](#), which is also attached below.