



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie on New Energy Plant Siting Law: Listen to Local Communities

PATTY RITCHIE June 1, 2012

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Senator Patty Ritchie has written to the state Public Service Commission to urge that the views of local communities be taken in account when choosing where to site major electric generating facilities, including wind.

[A copy of Senator Ritchie's letter to the PSC can be viewed by clicking here.](#)

Senator Ritchie's May 29 letter was filed as part of the "public comment" on proposed regulations to implement the state's new Article X power plant siting law. Senator Ritchie opposed the new law because she thought it gave too much power to state regulators and electric companies to override local communities in decisions on where to build new generating plants.

Still, she said the PSC appeared ready to "narrowly" interpret the law to maximize community input.

"It is important that the statute, which provides a standard for 'overriding' local laws, and the proposed regulations which narrowly interpret that standard, provide local governments with greater standing during the approval process," the Senator wrote. "The fact that the proposed regulations contain three different tests to qualify for a local law override, and the siting law does not, is a step in the right direction."

"However it is critical that the needs and desires of the local communities play an integral role in the approval process."

The power plant siting law gives sweeping powers to the state to authorize construction of new plants, but also establishes a system for residents and local governments to have input or oppose those plans.

Comments from the public and local governments are to be considered by the PSC before final rules are put in place.