



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Gov. Cuomo Ok's Ritchie Bill Boosting Funds for Eee Spraying

PATTY RITCHIE October 3, 2012

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### **Oswego to Share in New \$100,000 State Fund to Help Combat Disease Carrying Bugs**

Governor Cuomo today signed legislation sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie, that boosts state payments to counties, including Oswego, to help in the fight against EEE, West Nile Virus and other mosquito-borne diseases.

The new law, S.7340, which was sponsored in the Assembly by Syracuse-area Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli, provides up to \$100,000 in additional state reimbursement for aerial mosquito control spraying over state land.

In 2011, about 20 percent of lands that were treated by the county to eliminate mosquitoes were owned by the state.

“I have been working for the past two years to show Oswego County that it’s not alone in its fight against EEE, which has already claimed the lives of three local residents, including Maggie Sue Wilcox in 2011,” Senator Ritchie said. “This additional funding is just part of a multi-pronged approach I have taken, in conjunction with state and county officials, to raise public awareness and prevent further injury and death from EEE.”

“I want to thank the Governor for recognizing the serious danger that EEE and West Nile Virus pose to Oswego County residents, and across the state, and for taking this action today that reaffirms the state’s commitment to eliminating these deadly diseases.”

Right now, the state reimburses counties for only about half the cost of mosquito treatments, and only when the state Health Commissioner declares “an imminent threat to public health.”

The new law increases the reimbursement rate to 100 percent over state –owned land, which makes up a large portion of the potentially infected regions of Oswego County.

Senator Ritchie secured \$100,000 in the state budget to cover the increased reimbursement, but special legislation was required to allow those funds to begin flowing to eligible communities.

She also secured funds to distribute nearly 3,000 mosquito larvicide treatment kits to homeowners in Oswego and five other counties, and arranged EEE vaccinations for 1,743 horses statewide.

Senator Ritchie also teamed with county health officials on a public education campaign, distributing information and warnings through local schools to thousands of families, and has sponsored legislation directing the state health department to target its resources to helping find a cure for EEE.