



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Introduces Legislation to Create St. Lawrence County Wine Trail

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### **Measures Would Spotlight Black Lake, Lisbon and Winthrop Wineries**

State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced she has introduced legislation to establish a St. Lawrence County Wine Trail in an effort to help put local wineries and vineyards on the map, boost local businesses and create jobs in the North Country.

“Over the past 27 years, more than 250 new wineries have opened across New York State—that includes many in the North Country. Along with those new businesses come new opportunities to attract tourists to our region,” said Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Senator Patty Ritchie.

“This legislation will literally put our local wineries on the map, creating a county-wide tourist destination that can eventually be linked to the Thousand Islands Wine Trail in Jefferson County. Moreover, the measure will help to spotlight these new wineries, boosting their businesses and also will provide for new business and employment opportunities in the North Country.”

There are currently 16 wine trails across New York, from the eastern end of Long Island to the Niagara escarpment, and including Jefferson County’s wine trail. The St. Lawrence County Wine Trail would be the state’s 17<sup>th</sup>; a reflection of the industry’s growth and statewide presence.

Under the proposed legislation (S.6321), the St. Lawrence County Wine Trail would begin near Black Lake’s Bella Brooke Winery in Morristown, extending to Lisbon’s River Myst Winery and then to High Peaks Winery in Winthrop. The trail is designed also to attract visitors to St. Lawrence Brewing’s microbrewery in Canton, providing the four establishments additional opportunities to collaborate and market themselves.

This is just the latest effort by Senator Ritchie to support New York’s growing wine industry. In September, legislation cosponsored by Senator Ritchie to allow roadside farmers’ markets to sell wine manufactured and produced by up to two licensed farm wineries, special wineries or micro-wineries located within 20 miles of the roadside farmers’ markets was signed into law by Governor Cuomo.

In addition, Senator Ritchie has also sponsored legislation that included tax breaks and other incentives to support the state’s breweries and wineries, boost tourism, create jobs and reestablish New York farmers major contributors to the industries.

According to the New York Wine and Grape Foundation, there are nearly 1,500 family vineyards and 250 wineries across the state. New York currently rates third in the nation in wine and grape production, with the crop value estimated at \$52.3 million in 2012.