



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Leads Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers in Urging ‘Utv’ Ok

PATTY RITCHIE January 30, 2014

| ISSUE: **RECREATION AND TOURISM**

### **Call on Governor to Join in Supporting Vehicles Popular with Outdoorsmen**

State Senator Patty Ritchie is leading a bipartisan group of more than a dozen state lawmakers in calling on Governor Cuomo to join in supporting the use of Side-by-Side recreational vehicles, or “UTVs.”

The group of lawmakers have written to the Governor urging him to amend his state budget proposal to allow UTVs, which are increasingly popular among outdoorsmen—particularly elderly couples and families. New York is losing out on tens of thousands of dollars in state revenue through registration fees, and taxes from retail sales of UTVs, as well as countless tourism-related jobs by prohibiting UTVs which, because they are slightly larger than standard four-wheelers, can exceed outdated weight limits in current law.

The letter is signed by Senator Ritchie (R-Heuvelton), Senator Joe Griffo (R-Oneida County) and Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-Madison County), who are sponsors of legislation to allow UTV use. Both of those bills have passed the Senate in prior years.

The letter also is signed by Senator Bill Larkin (R-Orange County), George Maziarz (R-Niagara County), Michael Ranzenhofer (R-Erie County) and Jim Seward (R-Otsego County); as well as Assembly Members Will Barclay (R-Pulaski), Ken Blankenbush (R-Black River), Anthony Brindisi (D-Utica), Clifford Crouch (R-Chenango County), Aileen Gunther (D-Orange County), Steve Hawley (R-Genesee County) and Claudia Tenney (R-Oneida County).

“UTVs are increasingly popular with senior riders, couples and family members who may want to bring a child with them while enjoying our great outdoors,” the letter says. “Every year, New York State loses sales tax and motor vehicle registrations because of our outmoded definition of all-terrain vehicles in Transportation Law.”

“We want to thank you for your recent efforts to promote upstate tourism, introduce more New Yorkers to outdoor sports like snowmobiling, and introduce the world to our region’s winter wonderland. Adding this commonsense reform to your budget’s 30-day amendments will not only help increase non-tax revenues to the state, but also benefit Upstate’s rural communities and sportsmen.”

The Governor is permitted by law to amend his Executive Budget up to 30 days after its submission to the Legislature. This year, the Governor made that presentation on Jan. 21.

During public hearings on the budget this week, Senator Ritchie pressed both the state Environmental Conservation Commissioner, Joe Martens, and state Transportation Commissioner Joan McDonald to support a change in state law to allow UTVs. Both pledged to study the issue further.

The lawmakers said that the state prohibition is not preventing outdoorsmen from using UTVs—many are simply buying and registering them in other states, like Pennsylvania, where they are permitted.

“New York is losing out,” said Senator Ritchie. “By updating New York’s Transportation Law to allow for the registration of these vehicles, we can generate more revenue for the state, expand our tourism industry, create jobs and provide a boost to the upstate economy.”

Four-wheeling is big business. The lawmakers pointed to recent statistics that showed, in New York’s Tug Hill Region alone, the sport helps support 701 local jobs, and is responsible for \$11.3 million in wages, and nearly \$3 million in local sales, occupancy and other tax revenues.

Senator Ritchie’s bill, S.1946, has passed the Senate in each of the last three years. Senator Griffo’s bill, S.3557, has passed the Senate twice.

A copy of the lawmakers’ letter to the Governor is attached, and can be [viewed here](#).