



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Governor Signs Ritchie Bill to Create St. Lawrence Wine Trail

PATTY RITCHIE July 22, 2014

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### **Legislation Will Boost Tourism, Create Jobs by Putting Local Wineries on the Map**

State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced her legislation to put North Country wineries on the map, create jobs and boost the economy has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Ritchie's bill (S.6321-A) creates the "St. Lawrence Wine Trail," highlighting for tourists and residents the increasing number of wines being produced locally.

“In recent years a significant number of new wineries have popped up across New York State—and that includes a number of new establishments that are right here in our backyard,” said Senator Ritchie.

“The creation of the St. Lawrence Wine Trail is a chance for the North Country to capitalize on the fast-growing wine industry. By putting these local businesses on the map, we can boost tourism, create jobs, encourage more people to shop local as well as strengthen current wineries and encourage more new businesses to open.”

Local winery owners are applauding the signing of the legislation, which they say will have a significant, positive impact on their bottom lines.

“As a winery owner in St. Lawrence County, located on Black Lake, I believe this legislation will provide a great boost to the tourism industry in our area,” said Larry Hollister, a co-owner of Bella-Brooke Vineyard.

“This measure also allows us to show the significance and viability of the wine and grape industry for areas in New York State that no longer have farming as the only source of agricultural industry. I would like to thank Senator Ritchie for her support of this legislation.”

The new wine trail stretches more than 80 miles, traveling along Black Lake, through Morristown, Ogdensburg, Canton, Potsdam, Stockholm and Brasher Falls. It links three existing wineries in Hammond, Lisbon and Winthrop, as well as a new craft brewery in Canton.

As a result of the new legislation, the St. Lawrence Wine Trail will become the 17<sup>th</sup> wine trail in New York State. In the future, Senator Ritchie plans to introduce legislation to connect the routes in an effort to further support the industry and promote tourism statewide. With more than 1,630 family vineyards and more than 350 wineries, New York’s wine and grape industry generates more than \$4.8 billion annually for our state.

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Senator Ritchie has been working to foster the growth of New York State’s booming wine and craft beverage industries. Her efforts include sponsoring several pieces of legislation to promote wine-making, craft brewing and cider making as well as fighting to reverse budget cuts to programs that support these industries. Over the past four years, Senator Ritchie has been instrumental in securing more than \$3.4 million in funding to support New York’s wine and grape industries.