



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

County Clerks Back Ritchie Atv Trail Plan

PATTY RITCHIE July 23, 2015

| ISSUE: **RECREATION AND TOURISM, TRANSPORTATION**

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See Potential for Increased Tourism, Jobs and Local Government

The state's County Clerks are backing Senator Patty Ritchie's new plan to use millions of dollars from ATV registration fees—including fees from now-prohibited side-by-side models—to develop a statewide trail system for ATV riders and other four-season outdoor enthusiasts.

Meantime, Senator Ritchie announced that more than 2,000 New Yorkers have signed her online petition in support of an ATV trail system. The petition is available by [CLICKING HERE](#).

The Clerks issued a formal “[Memorandum in Support](#)” of Senator Ritchie’s bill, S.5821. The measure seeks to create a trail system for ATV riders to connect rural communities and encourage more riders to explore New York’s great outdoors.

“The New York State Association of County Clerks strongly supports this legislation as it will increase the safety and enjoyment of ATV and UTV owners, increase local tourism, increase local business and sales tax, and provide funding to ensure eco-friendly and safe trails,” the Clerks wrote.

Senator Ritchie, who previously served as St. Lawrence County Clerk, said the support could prove critical, as the group has a strong record of helping to rally public support behind common sense issues and legislation. She specifically cited the group’s success in blocking the 2010 state budget license plate gimmick, and an ex-Governor’s push to give drivers licenses to illegal immigrants.

“Our County Clerks, with their daily contact with taxpayers and constituents are not only known to keep their ears to the ground, listening to public opinion, they also have a strong track record of success in pressing for common sense ideas and legislation that the public wants and supports, and I am thrilled to have their support for this plan,” said Senator Ritchie.

“Together with thousands of sportsmen, seniors and families who have signed my online petition, they are sending an unmistakable message to Albany—we want the opportunity to enjoy New York’s great outdoors with our families and friends, and this ATV trails plan will make a difference.”

Key provisions of Senator Ritchie’s ATV trail plan would:

- * Direct more than \$1 million a year in ATV registration fees to planning, construction and maintenance of a system of trails and connectors that are suitable for ATV use;
- * Provide greater safety and environmental protection by requiring safety training for youthful ATV riders, and enacting more appropriate civil fines for abuses that cause environmental and property damage;
- * Raise the weight limit on ATVs to a more appropriate 1,800 pounds, allowing for registration of side-by side models increasingly popular among sportsmen, seniors and families.

“The overall mission of the County Clerk’s office is to improve not only our county, but our entire region for those who live here—and that’s what this legislation aims to do” said Oswego County Clerk Michael C. Backus, co-chair of the Association’s Legislative Committee. “Not only would this bill create a world-class trail network for locals and visitors from outside the state, it would help to generate local business and sales tax , as well as provide funding to improve our trails. We’re proud to support Senator Ritchie’s legislation and are committed to doing all we can to see that it becomes law.”

“Throughout the course of the year, our office comes into contact with countless taxpayers, giving us the opportunity to hear what’s important to them and what we can change to improve life in St. Lawrence County,” said St. Lawrence County Clerk Mary Lou Rupp. “We’re pleased to back this measure, which has the support of the people of our region, and will help to increase recreational opportunities for individuals across our state, increase revenue, boost tourism and help to create much-needed jobs.”

“Taking to the trails on an ATV is a popular pastime for so many people in our region,” said Jefferson County Clerk Gizelle Meeks. “This legislation sponsored by Senator Ritchie represents a tremendous opportunity to not only improve our trails, but also to improve our entire state. We are proud to support his measure, which would go a long way towards providing more riding opportunities for New Yorkers and boosting our overall economy.”

Senator Ritchie’s bill was introduced in June. She said the bill will be a top priority in the new legislative session that begins next year.

[CLICK HERE to read the County Clerk's memo of support for Senator Ritchie's bill.](#)