



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## GOVERNOR SIGNS OGDENSBURG PORT LAW TO HELP LIFT NORTH COUNTRY

PATTY RITCHIE November 22, 2015

| ISSUE: **RECREATION AND TOURISM, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



Senator Patty Ritchie today announced that the Governor has signed into law her bill to modernize the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority and strengthen its role in making the River City and St. Lawrence County a true international gateway to Canada for business and travelers.

The measure clears the way for an ambitious plan to expand the Ogdensburg International Airport to allow for a new carrier and larger planes that can link North Country and Canadian travelers to major cities across the country, and gives the Authority access to financing to rebuild and strengthen the 50-year-old international bridge--the 17th busiest border crossing along America's Northern Boundary--and expand port and rail services to support the needs of Great Lakes shippers and local industry.

"This new law can help transform our North Country economy and create jobs by acting as a springboard for long-needed improvements and repairs to the international bridge, port and rail, and by giving the green light to an ambitious airport expansion plan that will attract international travelers and make it more appealing for local residents to use the facility for business and personal travel," said Senator Ritchie. "I am truly pleased that the Governor has recognized the role that OBPA can play in strengthening and growing the North Country economy and making our region a true international gateway for businesses, travelers and our friends to the north."

The measure, S.5861, makes a number of technical changes to the laws that originally created OBPA to expand its authority to borrow for maintenance and repair of its port and bridge facilities. It also removes ambiguity over OBPA's role in the airport expansion, allowing the project to move ahead without delay.

"Constructed decades ago, OBPA's facilities are even more important today as we search for ways to strengthen Northern New York's economy. That's why I've already been speaking with top aides to the Governor, as well as other development planners, about securing new funding to preserve and expand these assets to bring more jobs and growth to this region," Senator Ritchie said.

"The needs in this region for better jobs and a jumpstart to our economy are urgent, and I am pleased by the Governor's commitment to helping us create a path to not only preserve these important economic assets, but also help create new opportunities for a stronger and better future for Ogdensburg, St. Lawrence County and the entire North Country region," said Senator Ritchie.

The final OBPA legislation, S.5861, was drafted by Senator Ritchie, who is not a lawyer, and then passed by the Assembly and Senate after she pointed out serious flaws in an earlier version of the bill. Senator Ritchie's amended bill was picked up in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Addie Russell.

The new law takes effect immediately.