



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ENDORSES RITCHIE PROPOSALS TO REVITALIZE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY

PATTY RITCHIE June 10, 2016



State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced the North Country Regional Economic Development Council—a group comprising local leaders charged with finding and supporting ways to boost the region’s economy and create jobs—unanimously endorsed two of her proposals to grow and revitalize St. Lawrence County’s economy.

At today's meeting of the Council, members adopted a resolution in support of steps necessary to move forward with Senator Ritchie's plan to allow for vacant property on the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center campus to be redeveloped for future commercial, industrial and housing purposes.

In addition, the group also endorsed her legislation (S. 6737) to have the state forgive outstanding loan debt incurred by the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority (OBPA). The measure is seen as a way to help the OBPA generate additional revenue to make vital repairs to the Ogdensburg-Prescott International Bridge, as well as to help the organization focus on other efforts to grow the local economy.

"Right here in our backyard exist tremendous resources and opportunities for strengthening our local economy and creating jobs," said Senator Ritchie.

"I would like to thank the North Country Regional Economic Development Council for endorsing my plans to revitalize St. Lawrence County's economy, and am hopeful their show of support will help put these proposals into motion."

Known as the "Point Airy Vision," Senator Ritchie's plan to redevelop undeveloped St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center lands would convert 160 acres of unused property at the Psych Center campus from state ownership to private developers. The parcels include one of the longest strips of undeveloped land alongside the majestic St. Lawrence River.

Senator Ritchie wrote and passed legislation in 2014 to begin the land transfer to the City of Ogdensburg on the first parcel. That bill was signed into law, and the city and state are currently in negotiations over the final transfer.

In the resolution adopted today, the North Country Regional Economic Development Council encouraged the state to move forward with the anticipated release of an RFP for the

operation of the steam generating power plant adjacent to the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center. Finding a company to invest, as well as upgrade the plant is seen as a critical part of the plan, which would help ensure the long-term stability of existing jobs, and make the site even more appealing to private developers seeking to create new ones. The current operator's contract with the state expires in three years.

In addition, the resolution also called on the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to review the condition of state-owned historic buildings, a move that would help clear the way for their rehabilitation and use.