



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Applauds Major Steps Toward Improving Broadband Access, Bolstering Business and Bridging Connections Between Local Residents and the World

PATTY RITCHIE August 3, 2016



State Senator Patty Ritchie joined state and local leaders Wednesday to applaud major steps forward in plans to improve internet speeds across Upstate New York, and in turn, better connect businesses and residents with the world.

At today's announcement held at SUNY Potsdam, Governor Andrew Cuomo highlighted several steps being taken to meet the state's goal of delivering broadband access to all New Yorkers by 2018, including a \$6.2 million investment that will connect tens of thousands of homes throughout the North Country with increased internet speeds.

"From local businesses and residents to rural health care providers and schools, high speed internet access is an essential part of enhancing the lives of people in the rural regions I represent," said Senator Ritchie, who serves as co-chair of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, a group that works to address challenges that are unique to rural parts of the state.

"For a long time now, people in our region have been calling for increased broadband internet access. I am excited about these major steps forward, which will help our businesses, hospitals, schools and other entities operate more efficiently and better connect local people with the rest of the world."

At today's announcement, Governor Cuomo and New York State Public Service Commission Chair Audrey Zibelman outlined the following advancements that will connect more New Yorkers with broadband internet access and help the state achieve its goal of connecting all New Yorkers to broadband by the end of 2018:

- \$6.2 million in investments through the New NY Broadband Program that will help connect nearly 135,000 homes in the North Country with high-speed internet;
- Following its merger with Time Warner Cable, Charter has outlined a four-year rollout plan that will provide service to 145,000 households across New York State that are currently unserved. In addition, Charter will also make available internet speeds of 100 megabits per-second for over 2 million Upstate homes and businesses by early 2017—which is two years ahead of schedule;
- The launch of a Request for Proposals for Round II of the New NY Broadband program, which will help bring high-speed internet access to the most remote areas of the state.

“In recent years, I have received hundreds of phone calls from people in the region I represent who struggle with internet speeds that are too slow—or in some cases, do not have any internet access at all,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for recognizing the need we have to increase connectivity, and look forward to seeing how these investments transform our region, boost our economy and improve the quality of life for all who live here.”

Senator Ritchie's support for expanding broadband access continues her efforts to advocate for improvements that enhance the quality of life in the rural regions of New York State she represents. This year, Senator Ritchie advocated for record support for key programs that support our state's farmers and enhance agriculture, a leading industry in New York State and Upstate New York.

Recently, in an effort to enhance rural health care, Senator Ritchie has been working to bring "Take a Look" tours to Central and Northern New York. Aimed at improving health care in our region, the tours—which are slated to take place in the fall—will introduce medical students to potential careers in our region, as well as help rural hospitals struggling to recruit primary care doctors.