



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Bill to Boost Craft Beverage Industry Signed Into Law

JOHN FRIOT September 13, 2016



State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced that Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed into law her legislation to boost the state's craft beverage and agriculture industries by making it easier for farm breweries and farm wineries to sell each other's products, and beverages made by other producers.

Under Senator Ritchie's measure (S.5707), farm breweries will now be permitted to sell wine and spirits, and beer and cider will be able to be sold at farm wineries. Previously, the law

allowed farm breweries to sell beer or cider, but did not allow them to sell wine or spirits. Similarly, the law allowed farm wineries to sell wine or spirits, but not sell beer or cider.

“In every corner of our state, the work done by craft beverage producers is encouraging consumers to ‘buy local,’ boosting our economy, strengthening our agriculture industry and creating jobs,” said Senator Ritchie, who serves as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. “This new law, which I was proud to sponsor, will cut red tape and in turn, allow business owners to expand their markets, as well as encourage the continued growth of New York’s already booming craft beverage and agriculture industries.”

Today, New York’s wine and grape industry generates more than \$4.8 billion annually for New York State, and includes nearly 1,700 family vineyards, as well as more than 400 wineries—up from just 14 wineries in New York State in 1976. There’s been growth when it comes to distilleries too, with the number of farm distilleries increasing by more than 25 percent in the past year.

New York’s craft beer sector has also seen tremendous growth, with the number of craft breweries more than doubling from 2012 to 2015. Overall, the craft beer industry has a \$3.5 billion economic impact on New York State annually. In addition, New York has harnessed the power of one of its biggest crops—apples—to expand our state’s cider industry. Today, there are more than 50 operating cideries in New York State, including 16 farm cideries, 19 cider producers and 16 farm wineries that also make cider.

Senator Ritchie's sponsorship of the new law continues her efforts to grow New York's craft beverage industry. Last year, she helped mark the opening of the St. Lawrence Wine Trail, which was established through legislation she sponsored. In addition, she has also fought in recent years for increased funding to support craft beverage producers.