



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie to Testify Before Canada's Parliament Wednesday

PATTY RITCHIE February 7, 2017



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State Senator Patty Ritchie will travel to Ottawa, Canada's capital to testify before the Canadian Parliament's Senate Defense and Security Committee on Wednesday in support of a measure that will ease stringent reporting requirements for boaters, and in turn, improve tourism in the Thousand Islands region, as well as relations between the two nations.

Senator Ritchie will be advocating for legislation (S-233) introduced by Senator Bob Runciman (Ontario-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes) and Member of Parliament Gordon

Brown (Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes) that would eliminate the need for American boaters to report to Canadian customs when passing through Canadian waters.

The legislation was sparked by an incident six years ago, where a U.S. citizen who was fishing in the Gananoque Narrows was stopped by Canadian customs who seized his boat and forced him to pay a \$1,000 fine before he could retake possession of the vessel.

“It’s a rare privilege for a New York State Senator to be invited to testify before Canada’s Parliament and I’m grateful to have the opportunity to speak in support of legislation that will have a significant, positive impact on both Canada and the United States,” said Senator Ritchie.

“When an American citizen was pulled over and his boat was seized, I promised I would do everything in my power to ensure U.S. boaters and anglers don’t have to worry if they stray into Canadian waters. It is my hope that testimony will move this important measure forward and eventually, improve relations between our two nations and make it easier for people to enjoy the St. Lawrence River.”

Senator Ritchie is scheduled to testify on Wednesday at noon, alongside Senator Runciman and Member of Parliament Brown.

In addition to easing reporting requirements for American boaters, the proposal would also exempt Canadian pleasure boaters from reporting to their own customs officials when they return to Canadian waters, as long as they met the same conditions while in U.S. waters.

While the fine for the American boater involved in the 2011 incident was ultimately reduced to \$1 after U.S. and Canadian lawmakers became involved, Senator Ritchie continues to hear from constituents who say they no longer dare to venture far from shore when boating

because of fears of straying into Canadian waters and facing possible fines. She described loosening the security restrictions as a common-sense approach to alleviating the problem, which has hurt tourism and caused concern among American boaters.

Those wishing to watch Senator Ritchie's testimony on Wednesday can do so via the following link:

<http://senparlvu.parl.gc.ca/XRender/en>