



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: Legislation To Ease Boating Restrictions In Canadian Waters Clears Canadian Senate

PATTY RITCHIE April 11, 2017



State Senator Patty Ritchie is applauding passage of legislation in the Canadian Senate that would improve relations between Canada and the United States, as well as boost tourism in the Thousand Islands and Lake Ontario region by easing strict reporting requirements for boaters.

In February, Senator Ritchie traveled to Canada's capital to testify before the Canadian Parliament's Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence in support of

the measure, which would eliminate the need for American boaters to report to Canadian customs when passing through Canadian waters.

“I want to thank Senator Bob Runciman and Member of Parliament Gord Brown for working with me to bring common sense back to boating on our international border waters,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I have been proud to advocate for passage of this important measure, which I hope will continue to advance and soon become law. Through this legislation, we can make it easier for people to enjoy our shared waterways and strengthen the relationship that exists between our two nations.”

“This law will encourage visitors to come back to the 1,000 Islands region and enjoy one of the most beautiful places in the world,” said Senator Runciman who represents Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. “I am very pleased to see it pass the Senate and head to the House of Commons.”

“This legislation will end the confusion and ensure that Canada treats U.S. boaters the same way the Americans treat Canadian boaters,” said Member of Parliament Gordon Brown who represents Leeds-Grenville – Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. “I promised the people of my riding that I would make this a priority in the House of Commons.”

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.

This legislation stems from a 2011 incident when Canadian Border Services Agency officials stopped a U.S. boater traveling along the Gananoque Narrows. Canadian officials told the boater he would need to immediately pay a \$1,000 fine or face being handcuffed, having his

boat towed to Canada and pay \$25,000 in penalties. While the fine was eventually reduced to \$1 after lawmakers got involved, the incident has kept many American boaters from venturing into Canadian waters.

After passage in the Canadian Senate, the measure was sent to the House of Commons.

*(Attn. photo editors: Member of Parliament Gordon Brown (far left) and Senator Bob Runciman (center) join Senator Ritchie in the above photo as they prepare to testify before Parliament)*