



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: Trail Pass Aims To Draw Canadian Snowmobilers To N.Y.

PATTY RITCHIE June 13, 2017



The State Senate Tuesday approved legislation, sponsored by North Country Senators Patty Ritchie and Betty Little, that would make it easier for Canadian snowmobilers to access New York's extensive system of trails, drawing much-needed tourism interest and spending to the region during the winter months.

The lawmakers' "snowmobile trail pass" plan, S.5129, would let Canadian citizens purchase a season-long permit at retail stores and other locations, bypassing the cumbersome and sometimes impossible requirement that they visit a DMV office to register sleds in person.

“New Yorkers and snowmobilers from around the US have already discovered the tremendous treasure of our well-groomed, accessible and exciting trail system, But current rules make it harder for us to attract significant numbers of Canadian riders to help grow the sport, support local economies and new jobs, and make New York an international destination for winter fun,” Senator Ritchie said.

While US citizens can use the DMV’s online service to register their sled, Canadians can’t and are required to visit a DMV office to register in person. These locations are usually closed on weekends and holidays when Canadians might have the greatest interest in coming to New York to ride.

Each year, 22,000 out-of-state snowmobilers come to New York to experience world-class trails and some of the best winter riding conditions anywhere. In 2015, the most recent year for which statistics were available, just 96 of them were from Canada.

“With easy-to-access border crossings and a sprawling trail system nearby, New York is a perfect destination for riders from two of Canada’s most populous provinces,” Senator Ritchie said. “It makes sense to simplify our registration rules to welcome more of these riders and grow our winter tourism industry.”

Trail pass fees would be identical to those charged for in-state registrations, with a portion used to maintain and expand the state’s trail system.

New York boasts more than 10,000 miles of publicly and privately owned and maintained snowmobile trails, including trails that have been recognized as among the best in the USA.

A 2011 study found that snowmobiling has an economic impact of \$868 million, when taking into account riders spending on lodging, meals, fuel and supplies.