



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie: \$125,000 to Grow Local Christmas Tree Farms

BRIAN DWYER December 14, 2017

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As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, Senate Agriculture Committee Chair State Senator Patty Ritchie is announcing she secured \$125,000 in the new state budget for the Christmas Tree Farmers Association to help grow and protect New York State's Christmas tree industry.

There are some 875 Christmas tree farms here in New York that cover nearly 19,000 acres statewide. There are only three other states in the country with more Christmas tree farms than New York State. On their own, these farms make up an \$8 million dollar industry, but

when you consider the ripple effect—buying local supplies, payrolls, etc.—that number nearly doubles.

This funding helps the Christmas Tree Farmers Association boost the marketing of our local, farm fresh Christmas trees, which will in turn, grow the industry even further.

“It’s become an annual tradition to gather the family and head out to a local farm to pick out a Christmas tree to bring home and decorate. New York State has some of the best trees our nation has to offer. As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I am committed to helping grow this important industry,” Senator Ritchie said.

The funding also ensures our Christmas trees will continue to thrive for years to come. Recently, the Christmas Tree Farmers Association teamed up with Cornell University on an Integrated Pest Management Program. Together, they train growers to identify and control pests. The program also helps growers fight disease and keep away unwanted, hungry visitors.

“The members of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association truly appreciate the Senator’s support for this and the other marketing and communications initiatives made possible with the grant funding,” said Mary Jeanne Packer, Executive Director of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York.

Senator Ritchie is hoping to further promote the Christmas tree industry by cosponsoring legislation that would establish a statewide ‘Go Green’ weekend. The measure (S.868-A) would designate one weekend a year in early December where all evergreen products—including trees, wreaths, garland and more—would be exempt from New York State sales tax.

To locate a tree farm near you, visit [www.christmastreesny.org](http://www.christmastreesny.org).