



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

## Ritchie Supported Bills to Boost Agriculture Pass Senate

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State Senator Patty Ritchie is applauding the passage of a number of measures that will help support New York's hardworking farmers and boost the state's agriculture industry.

Bills approved by the Senate Thursday include those that would teach more students about the importance of farming, provide support to young farmers just starting out in the industry, strengthen the connection between consumers and local foods and more. Several

of the measures were sponsored by Senator Ritchie during her tenure as Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee and were approved by the Senate previously.

“Throughout the years I have been proud to spearhead legislation aimed at boosting agriculture and supporting our hardworking farmers,” said Senator Ritchie.

“I am pleased that many of the measures I have sponsored in the past are again being approved by the Senate and thank their new sponsors for recognizing how vital it is to continue to push for changes that help grow our state’s leading industry. I am hopeful that in the remaining days of session, the Assembly will too recognize the importance of supporting our farmers and agriculture as a whole.”

Measures originally sponsored by Senator Ritchie, which she now cosponsors, that passed the Senate Thursday include:

***Senate bill 3873:*** A measure that would allow BOCES to establish and encourage young farmer apprentice programs.

***Senate bill 4655:*** A measure to establish a “one-stop” farming hotline to help connect farmers with information on resources available to help them grow their businesses.

***Senate bill 5437:*** A measure that would define an agricultural custom operator and provide agricultural district protections when an agricultural custom operator is working on lands within an agricultural district.

***Senate bill 3804-A:*** A measure that establishes the “New York Farm to School and School Garden Fund.” The fund would help schools establish gardens, as well as purchase equipment and educational materials to promote agricultural education and healthy eating.

In addition, measures cosponsored by Senator Ritchie that were approved by the Senate Thursday include:

***Senate bill 2767-A:*** A measure to encourage the expansion of the production of fresh fruits and vegetables by community gardens.

***Senate bill 251:*** A bill aimed at providing assistance to help establish or expand existing regional farmers' markets in areas of the state that have limited access to fresh farm products.

***Senate bill 5822-A:*** A bill to permit the use of local parks as locations for the establishment of farmers' markets.

***Senate bill 5715:*** A measure to expand eligibility for the New York State Young Farmer Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program, which was created by Senator Ritchie in 2014 to help support those just starting out in the industry.

***Senate bill 4945:*** A measure to amend the attachment that is currently required of farm plated vehicle registration to only require an indication of the point of origin of the farm vehicle, not every destination it may travel in the 25-mile limit.