



THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE  
48TH DISTRICT  
OSWEGO, JEFFERSON, ST. LAWRENCE COUNTIES

April 18, 2012

Hon. Andrew Cuomo  
Governor  
Executive Chamber  
The Capitol  
Albany, NY 12225

**CHAIR**  
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**MEMBER**  
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON  
RURAL RESOURCES

**RE: Being Ready for EEE**

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The warmer weather brings a return to the outdoors, and also a return of potentially disease-carrying mosquitoes like those that caused the death last summer of a 4-year-old Oswego County girl—the fifth Central New York victim of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, and third in the past three years alone.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls EEE “one of the most severe mosquito-transmitted diseases in the United States with approximately 33 percent mortality and significant brain damage in most survivors.” It’s recurrence in New York demands the strongest response from state and local health officials to prevent another tragic death this year.

I have been gratified by the responsiveness of your administration, in particular, that of Health Commissioner Dr. Nirav Shah, in assisting Oswego County in sharpening its own plan of attack against EEE. The Commissioner and his capable staff were instrumental in the success of the Roundtable hosted by me, in my role as Senate Agriculture Committee Chair, and Senate Health Committee Chair Kemp Hannon, to explore a more rigorous response this year. And your administration continues to provide invaluable assistance to communities that are grappling with the issue on a daily basis.

I also want to thank you for supporting budget initiatives that I advanced to help in this fight, including the allocation of \$150,000 in state funds for disease prevention and mosquito eradication, specifically relating to EEE. The budget additions included:

- ✓ \$100,000 to provide additional help to Oswego and other counties with costs for aerial spraying to control populations of infected mosquitoes;

**REPLY TO:**  **ALBANY OFFICE:** ROOM 815 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247 (518) 455-3438  
 **JEFFERSON COUNTY OFFICE:** 317 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 418, WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601 (315) 782-3418  
 **OSWEGO COUNTY OFFICE:** 46 EAST BRIDGE STREET, FIRST FLOOR, OSWEGO, NEW YORK 13126 (315) 342-2057  
 **ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY OFFICE:** 330 FORD STREET, OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK 13669 (315) 393-3024

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- ✓ \$50,000 both for creation of a voluntary horse registry and program of reduced cost equine EEE vaccine (there is no approved human vaccine), and for the purchase and distribution to the public by local agencies of larvicidal “Dunks” (or a similar product) to assist in controlling mosquitoes on private lands.

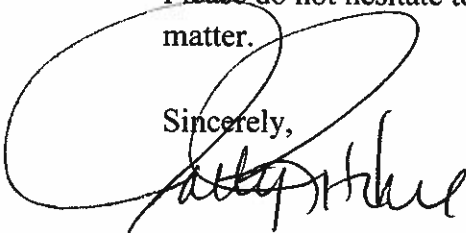
While the human cost of EEE has gained most of our attention, it is also true that EEE impacts farm animals, like horses, and adds untold expense to our agriculture community. There were 14 confirmed animal deaths from EEE in 2011.

Today, I met with Agriculture and Markets Commissioner, Darrel Aubertine, to discuss the importance of this new budget funding, much of it to be administered by that agency, to protect both human and farm animal populations from EEE. We agreed that New York simply cannot afford to allow bureaucratic delays to tie up these funds that can have an immediate and measureable effect in protecting public and animal health.

I am writing both to update you on this important issue, and to ask for your continued support in these efforts to protect public health this summer. I am confident that the steps we have taken together are making a positive impact and, with the assistance of your administration, I look forward to celebrating an EEE-free summer.

Thank you again for your leadership and the attention of your capable staff towards this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information or assistance on this or any matter.

Sincerely,



Patty Ritchie  
State Senator

cc: Commissioner Shah  
Commissioner Aubertine  
Senator Skelos  
Senator DeFrancisco  
Senator Hannon  
Members of the Oswego County Assembly delegation  
Hon. Fred Beardsley, Chairman, and Members of the Oswego County Legislature  
Hon. Phil Church, Oswego County Administrator