

NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

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Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Kathy Konst

May 9, 2008

Hon. David A. Paterson
Governor, State of New York
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Members:

James Allen
Dr. Ruth Bereson
John Cappellino
Dr. Deborah Curtis
Hon. Paul Dyster
Hon. Wright Ellis
Samuel Ferraro
Robert Gower
Hon. Michele Iannello
David Lacki
Celeste Lawson
Gregory Lewis
Hon. Peter McMahon
Hon. Barbara Miller-Williams
Hon. John Mills
Hal Morse
Hon. Jason Murgia
William Murray
Hon. Sean O'Connor
Christina Orsi
John Percy
Hon. Edward Rath III
Hon. William Ross
Laura St. Pierre Smith
Hector Titus
Peter Wendel

Governor Paterson:

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition today at its full board meeting unanimously voted to urge you maintain an upstate focus on economic development by headquartering the Empire State Development Corporation in Buffalo and by appointing Dan Gundersen chair of ESD for the state.

The Regional Coalition agrees wholeheartedly with your view that we need to send the message that we are one state, united in purpose to foster economic development for all. Indeed, since 1998 we have pursued bi-county economic development initiatives with the idea that a regional approach can often be more beneficial to our efforts than separate approaches.

While we are one state, it is however undeniable that we are two economies. Downstate and upstate New York have very dissimilar needs in terms of infrastructure, investment, and priorities. The initial promise of ESD being headquartered in Buffalo (at the meeting, we recall, where you were introduced as Mr. Spitzer's choice for lieutenant governor), and the subsequent appointment of an upstate chair sent a clear message that state government understood that we clearly need to be given resources tailored to our needs and not the needs of downstate.

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale
Matthew Enstice
Melinda Rath Sanderson
Lawrence Witul

Executive Director:

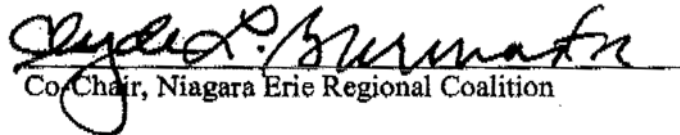
Tod A. Kniazuk


One of many examples of the effectiveness of this approach is the proposal for legislation to cap each brownfield remediation fund project at \$15 million, which is fine for our region as most projects are in the \$5-10 million range. In the past 25 companies have used over \$1 billion in these funds, with several of these big money projects being downstate condos or apartments.

Further, the appointment of Dan Gundersen to the position of upstate chair was a perfect fit given his experience in similar communities. We feel that at the very least he should continue as chair of a dedicated upstate ESD, but ideally the initial promise made to our community should be fulfilled and that Mr. Gundersen should be the sole chair of a united ESD headquartered in Buffalo, NY.

The member agencies of the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition – listed below – are “on the front lines” of the charge to revitalize our economy, and Empire State Development (which it should be noted did not take part in today’s vote) is a key member of the team. Simply stated, we need ESD here, and we need someone who understands upstate in charge. Anything less would be a tremendously ill-advised step backward for our community and for the state as a whole.

Sincerely,


Co-Chair, Niagara Erie Regional Coalition


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Member Organizations

Amherst Industrial Development Agency
Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County
Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau
Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus (ad hoc)
Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Canisius College Women’s Business Center (ad hoc)
City of Niagara Falls
Empire State Development
Erie County Association of Local Governments
Erie County Industrial Development Agency
Erie County Legislature
Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
Niagara County
Niagara County Building Trades
Niagara County Center for Economic Development
Niagara County Legislature
Niagara County Supervisors Association
Niagara Frontier Transportation Agency
Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation
Niagara University Hospitality Training & Research Center
The Peter Wendel Group
University at Buffalo Arts Management Program