

NIAGARA ERIE REGIONAL COALITION

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Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Kathy Konst

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Niagara Erie Regional Coalition calls for Gov. Paterson to commit to Empire State Development upstate headquarters *Group wants Gundersen as chair of unified agency in Buffalo*

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition today sent a letter to New York State Governor David Paterson calling on him to 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.

"In talking about eliminating the upstate chair for Empire State Development, Governor Paterson said that it sends the wrong message and that we need to be looked at as one state," Coalition Co-Chair and Erie County Legislator Kathy Konst explained. "While we agree that we're one state, it's very clear we're two very different economies; upstate has a distinct set of needs and priorities that simply aren't shared with downstate."

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale
Matthew Enstice
Melinda Rath Sanderson
Lawrence Witul

In the letter the Regional Coalition cited the example of brownfield incentive funds that were being used for multi-million dollar condo and apartment projects in New York City, while most upstate projects are in the \$5-10 million range.

Executive Director:

Tod A. Kniazuk

The Regional Coalition urged Governor Paterson to headquarter a unified Empire State Development Corporation in Buffalo with current upstate chair Dan Gundersen at the helm, citing his experience in similar communities and his work since being appointed here.

"What we're really asking Governor Paterson to do is fulfill the pledge former Governor Spitzer made to headquarter all of Empire State Development in Buffalo," Coalition Co-Chair and Niagara County Legislature Vice-Chair Clyde Burmaster said. "Doing anything less would be a tremendously ill-advised step backward for our community and for the state as a whole."

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition is a public, private, and not for profit partnership formed in 1998 to pursue bi-county collaborations in the fields of economic development, government affairs, tourism and culture, and transportation. Its member agencies include:

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

(It should be noted that while ESD is a member organization, it did not participate in the sending of the letter to Governor Paterson.)