



Monroe County Legislature

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Committee Assignment
PLAN & EC DEV -L

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: **Requiring that the County Administration Submit an Economic Development Annual Report on the Empire Zone Program to the Monroe County Legislature**

Honorable Legislators:

An economic development plan that results in overall local net job growth and significant capital investment is critical to building a strong local business climate, enhancing quality of life for area residents and reducing the flight of young adults from Monroe County.

The county's Division of Economic Development carries a key responsibility by providing local administrative support to the state-authorized Empire Zone program. The Monroe County Empire Zone offers special incentives such as sales tax exemptions, credits for real property taxes and tax reduction credits to encourage economic development, business investment and job creation.

Certainly, achieving net job growth countywide is a challenge in light of the significant layoffs at companies such as Eastman Kodak and the fact that upstate New York is losing young professionals at an alarming rate. Since 1990, 25% of 23-34 year-olds have left, often for better job opportunities. In order to invigorate the local business climate, reverse countywide net job losses and keep young professionals here, it is critical that aggressive, efficient and successful economic development policies be one of our top priorities.

There are occasions when this Honorable Body is asked under New York State Law to approve adding eligible businesses to the Monroe County Empire Zone as regionally significant projects. In order to be considered "regionally significant" projects these businesses are required to invest a minimum dollar amount in capital improvements and create a minimum number of net additional jobs in exchange for state-funded property tax credits and other benefits. There are also many instances in which tax breaks and other benefits are granted to companies choosing to

expand or begin operations within the designated Empire Zone. However, despite legislative involvement with the program, there is no requirement that calls for annual reporting of Monroe County Empire Zone activities to the County Legislature.

We believe that this Honorable Body, in its efforts to best gauge the economic success of the Monroe County Empire Zone, should receive annual summary data regarding the program.

Therefore, we request that on an annual basis, the Administration provide this Honorable Body with an Empire Zone Report that includes a listing of all Monroe County Empire Zone applicants, all Monroe County Empire Zone benefits and incentives promised and granted to eligible companies, the number of net new jobs created by each Monroe County Empire Zone beneficiary and the total capital investment made by each Monroe County Empire Zone beneficiary.

This proposal will have no effect on the 2006 Monroe County Budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Calvin Lee, Jr.
Assistant Democratic Leader

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