

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) issued the following statement today commending New York Governor David Paterson for appointing M&T Bank CEO Robert Wilmers as chairman of the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC):

"I am pleased that the Governor listened to our recommendations and addressed the concerns of local businesses and communities. Locating ESDC headquarters in one of our major Upstate cities is a great step forward and a true sign that Governor Paterson is fully committed to recognizing Upstate's unique needs and vast economic potential.

"While our region has faced economic hardships, we have also made tremendous strides in recent years to foster development and create new jobs, making critical strides recently with the innovative field of alternative energy. I look forward to working in partnership with the new ESDC chairman to continue moving the Upstate New York economy forward."

In May, Arcuri sent a letter to Governor Paterson highlighting the need to appoint an ESDC chairman with knowledge of Upstate New York's unique economic needs. In response, the Governor assured Arcuri that Upstate communities and leaders would be included in all future discussions to ensure the best interests of Upstate are made a statewide economic development priority.

A copy of the letter Arcuri sent to Governor Paterson is included below:

May 9, 2008

The Honorable David Paterson
Governor
State of New York
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

It has come to my attention through recent media reports that you are considering altering the existing leadership structure of the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC). Specifically, I have concerns regarding your proposal to do away with the current two-branch, separate Upstate and Downstate ESDC co-chairmen.

While I can appreciate your concern that the existing co-chairmen system does not represent a “unified New York,” the Upstate and Downstate economies are quite unique in both their economic strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, economic development experience and priorities, which may be good for Downstate, are not always good for Upstate. It is critically important for any future ESDC chairman or chairmen to understand, appreciate, and have significant experience with Upstate New York’s economic needs. I am confident that solutions exist to unify New York’s economic development strategies, while ensuring that Upstate’s economic development interests are represented and encouraged to thrive.

The Upstate New York economy, particularly within the counties I represent, has been devastated by job loss and economic downtimes throughout the last two decades. That said, we have also made tremendous strides in recent years to heal economic scars and begin rebuilding the region. It is essential that ESDC provide focus, attention and financial assistance to Upstate New York based on the leadership of someone with expertise and experience with our history and vision.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue with you in further detail. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention and consideration and, for your continued leadership on behalf of our state.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. ARCURI
Member of Congress

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