

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) joined local development leaders today at Mohawk Valley EDGE to highlight the potential impact of legislation, sponsored by Arcuri and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives last week, to bring economic development resources to Oneida, Cayuga, Herkimer and Seneca Counties.

“This critical legislation would help local development agencies, like Mohawk Valley EDGE, harness the power of federal resources and local communities to create jobs and grow our economy right where we need it most,” **said Arcuri**. “The Northern Border Regional Commission would provide federal funding and foster regional cooperation to help create new jobs and economic growth in Cayuga, Herkimer, Oneida and Seneca Counties. Projects will be determined by local needs and priorities – not dictated by Washington – making sure local economic growth is based in local communities.”

The legislation, H.R. 3246, would create a new Northern Border Regional Commission, which would be charged with investing \$40 million each year in federal resources for economic development and job creation in economically-distressed border areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. In New York State, the Northern Border Regional Commission would directly benefit Cayuga, Herkimer, Oneida and Seneca Counties.

The Northern Border Regional Commission is modeled after the successful Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which provides economic development assistance to Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Otsego, Tioga and Tompkins Counties. Since its creation, the ARC has reduced the number of distressed counties in its region from 219 to 100, cut the poverty rate from 31% to 15%, and helped 1,400 businesses create 26,000 new jobs.

“Infrastructure is an important piece of any economic development effort,” **said Steven J. DiMeo, President of Mohawk Valley EDGE**.

“Without the proper infrastructure – or the funding to create the infrastructure – projects cannot go forward, jobs cannot be created and commerce cannot occur. The Northern Border Commission would be able to provide for such needs to help spur economic growth in areas which may otherwise face difficult challenges in attracting new investment and developing new jobs. Mohawk Valley EDGE thanks Congressman Arcuri for sponsoring this legislation, and for the benefits it will bring to Oneida and Herkimer Counties.”

“We have been very supportive of Congressman Arcuri’s efforts to create the Northern Border Regional Commission,” **said Michael Reese, Executive Director of the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District**. “The Northeast, including the Mohawk Valley, has an aging infrastructure and additional investment from this commission will allow us to make necessary improvements that will create jobs and expand our regional economy.”

The Commission would utilize the successful ARC approach, where local development districts and other non-profits bring project ideas and priorities to the commission from the local level, making sure actions reflect both local needs and regional economic development goals. It also ensures that states have a deciding voice in the investment made within their borders.

It would create a federal-state partnership to promote development through regional planning, technical assistance, and funding of projects aimed at encouraging economic prosperity.

Projects possible under the Commission include transportation infrastructure, broadband development, alternative energy projects, agricultural development, health care facilities and other needs as determined by local communities.

H.R. 3246, the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007, authorizes the creation of five regional economic development commissions under a common framework of administration and management. These commissions are designed to address problems of systemic underdevelopment in their respective regions. The five commissions are: the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Delta Regional Commission, the Northern Great Plains Regional Commission, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, and the Southwest Border Regional Commission.

H.R. 3246 has been referred to the Senate. Arcuri and others will work aggressively to ensure that the Senate takes action on this critical legislation.

Arcuri was joined at Mohawk Valley EDGE by Steven DiMeo, President of Mohawk Valley EDGE; Michael Reese, Executive Director of Mohawk Valley Economic Development District and a host of other local economic development leaders.

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