

Washington, DC -- The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee advanced bipartisan legislation creating a Northern Border Regional Commission today with the strong support of committee member U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica), who is a sponsor of the bill, to bring much-needed job creation and economic development resources to Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida and Herkimer Counties.

“This is a real victory for business and families in our region who have heard all too often about companies relocating or down-sizing,” **said Arcuri**. “The Northern Border Regional Commission would bring much-needed federal resources to some of the hardest hit communities in our area-bringing new jobs and economic opportunity to Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida and Herkimer Counties. I introduced this legislation in March and today’s vote is a huge step towards making this critical investment in economic development a reality. I will continue to work hard in Washington to make sure local communities have the resources they need to grow and thrive.”

The Northern Border Regional Commission, modeled after the successful Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), would be charged with investing \$40 million per year in federal resources for economic development and job creation in the most economically-distressed border areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. The commission would create a federal-state partnership to promote development through regional planning, technical assistance, and funding of projects aimed at encouraging economic prosperity. It builds on the success of the ARC, which provides economic development assistance for Broome, Chenango, Ontario, Cortland, Tioga, Tompkins, and Otsego counties.

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

In March, Arcuri was joined by Representatives Mike Michaud (D-ME), Paul Hodes (D-NH), John McHugh (R-NY), Tom Allen (D-ME), and Peter Welch (D-VT) in re-introducing this bipartisan legislation Michaud first introduced three years ago.

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.

Creation of the Northern Border Regional Commission was included in H.R. 3246, The Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007, which passed the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today.

H.R. 3246 authorizes 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 will be considered by the House in the fall.

Arcuri's statement during today's Transportation and Infrastructure Markup is attached:

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**U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24)**  
**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Markup**  
**Opening Remarks**  
**August 2, 2007**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like thank Chairman Oberstar and Chairwoman Norton for delivering this legislation that will authorize three new economic development commissions – the Northern Border, Southeast Crescent, and Southwest Border Regional Commissions – and reauthorizes the successful Delta and Northern Great Plains Regional Commissions. These are all valuable legislative proposals that will help bring economic development to regions of our country where we desperately need it.

I am proud to join the chorus of supporters as a cosponsor of H.R. 3246, the Regional Economic and Infrastructure Development Act of 2007, and I thank the Chair for expediting its consideration.

Over the last several decades, Upstate New York has had a consistent pattern of economic distress as a result of substantial losses in the manufacturing sector, coupled with aging infrastructure and lack of opportunities for a skilled workforce. My district alone has seen a staggering loss of more than 14,000 manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2005. This has been devastating to our local communities. However, this isn't an anomaly, it is extremely characteristic of several states in the Northeast and a targeted regional approach, like the one created by this bill, can help bring back economic vitality to a region in dire need.

This bipartisan legislation creates a Northern Border Regional Commission that will bring much needed job creation and economic development resources to the Northeast region. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Upstate New York will all benefit tremendously from the establishment of this Commission because it will assess and address the very specific needs, assets, and challenges of this region as a whole.

The Commission will create a federal-state partnership where local development districts and other non-profits bring project ideas and priorities to the Commission from the local level to promote economic development through regional planning, technical assistance, and funding of projects aimed at encouraging economic prosperity.

The Northern Border Regional Commission is modeled after the very successful Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) approach, an idea conceived by Chairman Oberstar, over 40 years ago.

Simply put, the numbers speak for themselves. 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. I welcome the creation of similar Commissions with this kind of proven track record.

The Northern Border Regional Commission not only will extend benefits to economically distressed counties in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, but will also allow Upstate New

York counties like Oneida, Herkimer, Cayuga and Seneca to enjoy the same benefits their neighboring counties in the Southern Tier enjoy under the Appalachian Regional Commission.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and the 5 regional Commissions that will help create parity for economically anemic regions across the country.

Thank you, I yield back the balance of my time.

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