



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

Brian M. Kolb  
Minority Leader

March 24, 2015

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Lieutenant Governor, State of New York  
Executive Chamber, State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Lieutenant Governor Hochul:

I write in response to your recent letter and to express my serious concerns regarding the Governor's Upstate Revitalization Initiative. Economic development programs must treat every region equally. In its current form, the Upstate Revitalization Initiative establishes obvious winners and losers. Since the Governor announced the program in January, I have heard mounting concerns about the program and the process by which this funding is distributed. For example:

- The "Buffalo Billion" program, which you highlight in your letter and which supposedly serves as a model for the Upstate Revitalization Initiative, was not a competitive process. Why not? And why should upstate regions be forced to compete for \$500 million when Buffalo was given twice that amount?
- Over the last four years, Governor Cuomo's administration has distributed roughly \$3 billion in taxpayer money at its sole discretion. Elected representatives who live in the districts and have greater local knowledge have had no role in selecting award recipients. Before the new upstate initiative is implemented, Governor Cuomo should commit to an open, transparent and equitable opportunity to provide needed resources in the seven regions.
- If the \$1.5 billion was made available equally to seven upstate regions, each would receive approximately \$215 million. That figure does not include what also would be available through the Regional Economic Development Councils. This proposal still excludes the Legislature's input on behalf of the people we represent.

Not surprisingly, people overwhelmingly disagree with the approach being offered by the Governor's Upstate Revitalization Initiative. A recent Siena Institute poll that showed 77 percent of New Yorkers are opposed to the drastic inequity of state funding distribution.

As the only legislative leader from Upstate New York, I know that each region faces unique challenges and needs assistance to stimulate their economies. Fortunately, we have resources available to develop and implement a more effective program than what the Governor has proposed. I hope that you will encourage the Governor to consider a new approach that helps every region of Upstate New York.

Sincerely,

**Brian M. Kolb**  
Assembly Minority Leader

**CC: New York State Assembly Members**  
**New York State Senators**