



April 30, 2020

Honorable Steven M. Cohen
Honorable William J. Mulrow
Co-Chairs, NYS Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: NYS Economic Empowerment Zones

Dear Former Secretaries Cohen and Mulrow:

As per our discussion during the recent ABNY teleconference, I am writing on behalf of the Association for a Better Long Island (ABLI), the region's largest real estate trade association representing Long Island's largest commercial, industrial & mixed use developers, to request that the NY Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board include the creation of economic empowerment zones ("EEZ") to spur economic development and create jobs required to heal the economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you both rightly noted, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Long Island's economy, affecting both small and large businesses. The economic impact of COVID19 is yet to be fully appreciated. We are currently in a state of emergency, where numerous business are required to close and over 1.4 million residents have filed for unemployment. Thankfully, it appears that Governor Cuomo's efforts have proven successful, and New York is starting to flatten the curve. While the data shows a reduction in hospitalization rates and positive cases, we are not out of the woods yet and it will be several months before the economy is fully reopen. For this reason, it is critical that New York State take the necessary proactive steps now to spur economic development and create thousands of jobs once the economy is reopened.

Under the State's disaster declaration, I am advised that the Governor has the power to amend or suspend regulations, so long as those actions directly assist the state in its disaster response. There is little doubt, the creation of EEZs will assist the state in its disaster response to the economy. Specifically, EEZs designate targeted areas where development would address critical needs, like transit-oriented developments to address our lack of diverse housing options, and removes/suspends local zoning control to expedite approvals. Such an approach was also highlighted in a March 31, 2020 Opinion essay featured in Newsday. EEZs would generate tens of millions of investment dollars and create thousands of construction and long term jobs.

Furthermore, it would remove the traditional NIMBY reactions that have consistently deterred local elected officials from approving transformative projects that Long Island desperately needs. Instead, within each EEZ there would be a designated group of key stakeholders to ensure community needs and concerns are addressed. For the reasons listed above, ABLI believes that is critical for the NY Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board, tasked with restarting our economy, include EEZs in its NY Forward Plan.

The Association for a Better Long Island respectfully requests the NY Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board includes the creation of economic empowerment zones designated under the Governor's emergency powers to spur the economic recovery of a region of 2.7 million people that helps drive the state's economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Blumenfeld', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Edward Blumenfeld, Founder
Association for a Better Long Island

cc: LI NYS Assembly Delegation
LI NYS Senate Delegation