

## COMMENTARY

# An open letter to Cuomo, Stewart-Cousins and Heastie

*The following was addressed to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Speaker Carl Heastie. It was signed by Mitch Pally, CEO, Long Island Builders Institute; Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island; and Kevin Law, president and CEO of Long Island Association.*

Between the time this correspondence was initially drafted and the several short days before it was sent, the world as we know it has changed drastically. COVID 19 has altered not just our public health landscape but the economy as well and no one knows how long it will take to recover.

Within this seriously damaged economic environment, we approach your offices

on behalf of Long Island's major economic development organizations, the Association for a Better Long Island, the Long Island Builders Institute, and the Long Island Association.

Still sitting within Albany's legislative agenda is consideration of the "expansion of public works" legislation, specifically language included in FY 2021 New York State Executive Budget, Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation Article VII legislation, Part FFF. If allowed to proceed, that legislation would likely prolong and seriously exacerbate the economic peril New York State is facing in an era of COVID-19 fallout.

The current legislation proposes an unprecedented expansion of the definition of

public works to include construction projects that receive a limited amount of public funds and/or public benefits. If approved, it will significantly threaten our region's ability to attract and maintain private investment and create new jobs while harming much needed economic development, preventing the creation of diverse housing and transit-oriented development. It would also exacerbate the significant state deficit that is already at a crisis level before this pandemic.

It is clear that in the aftermath of COVID-19 there will be a need to increase state revenue and decrease spending in order to balance the budget. Thus it is critical the state not inhibit private sector economic development with burdensome

wage requirements while putting into place additional public policies, rules, and regulations that make projects economically unfeasible. That would only enhance the likelihood for a recession economists are already forecasting.

Hindering economic development when our nation's, state's, and region's economy is at risk would have long-lasting impacts. Therefore, we strongly oppose language to expand the definition of public works included in FY 2021 NYS Executive Budget, Transportation, Economic Development and Environmental Conservation Article VII legislation, Part FFF and/or variations of such legislation as it will deepen an already serious economic crisis.

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