



North Country Alliance

Box 8561 Clarkson University
Potsdam, New York 13699-8561
Telephone: (315) 268-3778 x29

Email: solutions@citec.org
Web: www.northcountryalliance.org

2015 NCA Education and Outreach Agenda

OUR MISSION: The North Country Alliance (NCA) is a private-public consortium of economic development organizations, private businesses, utilities, public and private colleges, the media and financial institutions working to grow the economy of New York's seven-county North Country region. Its role is to offer a single point of access to the resources you need to expand or locate your business in Northern New York. Visit our website at www.northcountryalliance.org.

➤ **THE NCA SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:**

The NCA applauds Governor Cuomo's regional approach to economic development with the creation of the Regional Councils. The North Country has embraced the opportunity to develop a vision and strategies based on input from the people and organizations that know their area best. It is now critical to bring key economic development programs, similar to that done with the Excelsior Jobs Program in 2013, into compliance with the same spirit of regionalism.

New York is a diverse state; hence, programs with a "one-size-fits-all" approach are not the best mechanism to affect positive job growth. The NCA urges the Governor and the Legislature to consider the following amendments to the state's economic development programs:

- ✓ Programs should contain "weighted" regional cost indices that take into account rural and urban areas as they relate to job creation standards and potential economic impacts of projects. The type, size and pay quality of jobs created in rural areas are generally far less than that in metropolitan areas and these should not be considered negatively in determining benefits to new and expanding companies;
- ✓ Diversify benchmarks for qualifying businesses beyond just job creation and include such qualifiers as annual capital investment, annual training activities, annual facility improvements, facility diversifications, etc.; and
- ✓ Economic impact should be relative to the region where a business is locating. Establish program criteria that take into account the number of jobs created or retained relative to the size of the community, business and unemployment rate.

➤ **THE NCA SUPPORTS THE GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL TO REDUCE THE SMALL BUSINESS TAX CREDIT (9a) FROM 6.5% TO 2.5%.**



North Country Alliance

Box 8561 Clarkson University
Potsdam, New York 13699-8561
Telephone: (315) 268-3778 x29

Email: solutions@citec.org
Web: www.northcountryalliance.org

➤ **THE NCA SUPPORTS THE GOVERNOR'S CONTINUED PROMOTION OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL PROCESS AND SUPPORTS THE ADDITIONAL EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS:**

- \$150 Million for Round V of the REDC Competition;
- \$500 Million for the New NY Broadband Fund;
- \$1.5 Billion for the Upstate Revitalization Fund;
- \$35 Million for the Global NY Development Fund; and
- \$55 Million for Round IV of SUNY 2020 Grants

➤ **THE NCA EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN FOR THE EROSION OF IDA POWERS BY INCREASING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS ON ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES AND AGENCIES IN NEW YORK STATE:**

- ✓ The North Country Alliance expresses **STRONG OPPOSITION** to a proposal in Governor Cuomo's 2015-16 Executive Budget Proposal (Part W of the Revenue bill), which would add new requirements and restrictions affecting Industrial Development Agencies and local economic development. The proposal would result in the surrender of considerable control of local economic development to the state, shift local project decision-making from local governments to Albany, and delay the economic development process by requiring additional approvals by ESD and the Department of Taxation and Finance before an IDA could convey tax exemptions.

IDAs exist in this highly competitive global economy to respond to the unique economic challenges and opportunities of the local communities they serve. To be effective, they must be able to respond to businesses, new or existing, that want to invest in our communities, in a timely manner. Consequently, the NCA urges the rejection of Part W of the Revenue bill in the Governor's budget as this proposal would make New York less competitive, centralize control of local economic development in Albany, and result in fewer jobs being created that bolster local economies.

- ✓ The NCA **OPPOSES** any legislation that would add additional financial and administrative burdens to IDAs and LDCs with no real public benefit. It also may disrupt the LDC's operations if restructure is required. Moreover, expanding the Public Authority Law to private or non-governmental not-for-profit corporations that were not even created by statute is serious mission creep and would impede economic growth in the state.

Local industrial development agencies and their affiliated development corporations are the drivers to ensure the success of the Governor's and Regional Councils' initiatives. Robust, empowered and integrated local development agencies and corporations are the on-the-ground means for



North Country Alliance

Box 8561 Clarkson University
Potsdam, New York 13699-8561
Telephone: (315) 268-3778 x29

Email: solutions@citec.org
Web: www.northcountryalliance.org

implementing, executing and completing the shared objectives of the Governor and Regional Development Councils.

In order to provide the best environment for local, regional and New York State economic development success, the **NCA SUPPORTS** the following:

- ✓ Restore the IDA power to undertake civic facility projects.
- ✓ Include assessed values of real property improvements associated with PILOT agreements in the calculation of the real property tax cap “tax base growth factor.”
- ✓ Provide for consistent treatment of local development corporations from the various regulatory and legislative entities in New York State government. The Authorities Budget Office treats LDCs as public authorities, imposing significant oversight and reporting requirements, many of which add administrative and financial burdens to the LDCs operations. At the same time, the Comptroller’s office has issued an opinion defining LDCs as private entities and preventing them from obtaining administrative services from IDAs. This reduces efficiency, causes unnecessary duplication and limits the ability for New York State communities to provide comprehensive one-stop economic development services through their professionally staffed IDAs.
- ✓ The NCA **SUPPORTS** legislation that implements statewide retroactive “save harmless” for IDA/municipal employees in the New York State Local Retirement System who provided services to LDCs. This measure would respond to the Comptroller’s opinion #2001-1 that prohibits IDA staff and municipal employees who are also in the NYS Local Retirement System from providing services to an LDC, even when the services are provided subject to a contract and the LDC is an affiliated corporation of the IDA.

➤ **THE NCA SUPPORTS THE FOLLOWING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES:**

- ✓ 2015-16 Executive Budget proposal to expand the Excelsior Jobs Program: The Proposal provides for a \$10 million for an Employee Incentive initiative as part of the Excelsior Job Tax Credit Program that would equal 50% of eligible training costs, up to \$10,000 per employee receiving eligible training.
- ✓ Provide special incentives to rural areas that help them retrain dislocated teachers to staff chronically hard-to-fill rural health care positions like registered nurses, physician’s assistants, health care data base managers, etc. through dedicated individual training accounts.
- ✓ Provide high-tech/manufacturing job training incentives whereby businesses can access tax credits to help off-set the costs of training the local workforce (including the costs of purchasing equipment for training).



North Country Alliance

Box 8561 Clarkson University
Potsdam, New York 13699-8561
Telephone: (315) 268-3778 x29

Email: solutions@citec.org
Web: www.northcountryalliance.org

- The NCA **SUPPORTS** the extension of the Brownfield Cleanup Program in the Governor's 2015-16 Executive Budget proposal. We urge the Legislature to consider making the program permanent.
- The NCA **SUPPORTS** legislation that will allow recipients of old Urban Development Corporation grants used to create Regional Revolving Loan Trust Funds to be allowed to keep and utilize loan interest income for administration.