

AN OPEN LETTER FROM BUSINESS, DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ACROSS NEW YORK STATE:

***AS COVID-19 PANDEMIC HURLS US INTO A RECESSION, NEW YORK
CAN'T AFFORD DISASTROUS PREVAILING WAGE PROPOSAL THAT
WOULD MAKE IT EVEN HARDER TO REBUILD OUR ECONOMY***



Dear Governor Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins & Speaker Heastie:

As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an almost incalculable impact on virtually every aspect of our economy and our daily lives. Every industry, employer, community and family are feeling the shock and facing great uncertainty.

While we commend you all for the swift and decisive manner in which the State has moved to address this unprecedented crisis, we are deeply troubled by reports that proposals to expand prevailing wage to private projects receiving economic development assistance are still apparently being given serious consideration as part of the state budget.

To be clear, this is a proposal that this diverse group of organizations, representing the breadth of New York's economy, viewed as an imminent threat to job creation and economic development efforts long before this crisis upended our economy. Every argument against the expansion of prevailing wage to private work is dramatically heightened by the troubling new economic reality we all face. To be considering this measure now is almost inconceivable.

There is broad, probably universal, agreement that our economy is being hurled into recession or worse and going to need major stimulus to be revived once the current pandemic subsides. It is already brutally apparent that there are many businesses that likely will not survive, at least not in their current state. Many New Yorkers are already facing unemployment and economic loss, and that will only worsen as days and weeks pass.

Why, then at this moment would the State consider a policy that would make economic development much more difficult, killing projects or, at a minimum, significantly increasing the cost to the State—which has seen its finances and fiscal position laid to waste—to induce them?

Hindering economic development when our nation, state, and region's economy is on the ropes will dramatically worsen the already daunting economic outlook we all face. It will make much more difficult the work of rebuilding our economy, communities and State.

Therefore, we strongly oppose any effort to expand the application of prevailing wage to private projects receiving economic development assistance. Our economy could not afford this ill-advised policy before; it absolutely cannot now.

Very truly yours,

Brian Sampson, Associated Builders and Contractors, Empire State Chapter
Mike Elmendorf, Associated General Contractors of New York State
Kyle Strober, Association for a Better Long Island, Inc.
Dottie Gallagher, Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Ken Pokalsky, The Business Council
John Ravitz, The Business Council of Westchester
Tom O'Connor, Capital Region Chamber
Rob Simpson, CenterState CEO
Amy Shaw, Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
Mitch Pally, Long Island Builders Institute
Jennifer Waters, Mohawk Valley EDGE
Greg Biryła, National Federation of Independent Business
Ryan Silva, New York State Economic Development Council
Garry Douglas, North Country Chamber of Commerce
Rita Ferris, Northeastern Retail Lumber Association
Michael Kracker, Unshackle Upstate
Jolie Milstein, New York State Association for Affordable Housing
Rev. Reginald Bachus, The 400 Foundation
Craig Livingston, New York Real Estate Chamber
Regina Myer, Downtown Brooklyn Partnership
Kenneth Thomas, Minority & Women Contractors & Developers Association