



May 26, 2020
Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

RE: Private Investment in New York State

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of the Long Island Builders Institute, the largest residential home building trade association in New York State, let me once again congratulate you and your staff on the very informative and entertaining presentations you make every day to the people of our state on the effects of Covid-19. It has become required television for so many of us who wait to hear you discuss the effects of the current pandemic upon our state and how we will once again bounce back. Even my wife, who has never really been a fan before she retired from her teaching position, makes sure she watches every day as she works on her stationary bicycle.

Last weekend, at Jones Beach, you discussed once again how, in past situations such as this, significant public investment helped to invigorate our economy, whether it was the building of Jones Beach or the then Triborough Bridge or the Lincoln Tunnel. You once again indicated that the State of New York would provide significant public resources to provide much needed projects to put thousands of workers back to work, and expressed your strong hope that the federal government would provide both resources and the necessary approvals for additional projects, including the Gateway Tunnel to New Jersey and the expansion of the Second Avenue Subway. We can only hope that they listen to your words and provide such federal assistance.

In view of your comments, I wanted to bring to your attention that there are hundreds of projects on Long Island, both large and small, which can put to work thousands of our residents without the need for additional state resources or federal resources or state and/or federal approvals. Hundreds of projects on Long Island, ranging from multi-family housing to medical research to a proposed convention center to planned developments, are only awaiting the necessary county and local government approvals and permits to be able to move forward. Hundreds of millions of dollars of private investment are just sitting on the sidelines, waiting for such approvals, which unfortunately can take months and months and years and years here on Long Island. Such private investment will not necessitate any additional borrowing on the part of state government, nor await a new infrastructure bill in Washington. All it awaits are the necessary approvals and permits on the part of our county and local governments, and as such can significantly improve the recovery efforts of your administration as we move into your recovery timetable.

Thus, to make this private investment of hundreds of millions of dollars a reality on Long Island and bring thousands of our residents back to work, we do not need state money or federal money, we need the attention of your administration to help us get through our local zoning and planning and permit processes and bring these private projects to reality. You have indicated on numerous occasions that New York State will not be able to just go back to the "old normal" that we now must move onto the "New Normal" and use this very unfortunate set of circumstances to create a new economic model which will provide a new economic reality. Just going back to the way it was is not good enough, we must realign our new lifestyle with a new way of doing business for everyone.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss how the State of New York can assist our local governments in the formulation of a new zoning and planning process, not one which eliminates such local powers, but one in which such processes are more efficient and work with the private construction and investment communities to be able to build a series of significant projects which can put thousands of our residents back to work, can provide thousands of new housing units, can provide new opportunities for our small businesses and bring new entertainment and tourism venues to our communities. Your actions in the past few years to bring state attention to projects long thought as lost, such as the LIRR third track project, Moynihan Station and the Air train to LaGuardia Airport, can be used as examples of what can happen when the answer is Yes and not we will get to it, if ever. The major difference here is that we do not need state resources and attention as these projects did, we only need state attention as private investment will take the place of state resources on these projects on Long Island.

In view of these points and your prior successes, I only ask that you review the current situations and appoint a state official on Long Island whose only job will be to bring together our county and local government officials on such projects and who has the authority within your administration to make these private projects happen as soon as possible. Only a state official with the credibility and authority of your office can be the one person to bring our elected and appointed officials together now and move these projects forward so that they can start construction in 2020 and assist in our economic recovery after Covid-19. We need action and only you can provide the opportunity for such action to take place. Only you can make this happen.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our request. Time is of the essence for the hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens who have been negatively affected by Covid-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mitchell H. Pally".

Mitchell H. Pally
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: County Executive Steve Bellone
County Executive Laura Curran
ESDC Regional Director Cara Longworth