



February 3, 2006

The Honorable Joel Giambra
Erie County Executive
95 Franklin St. 16th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear County Executive Giambra:

On behalf of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, representing 3,000 business members in the Buffalo Niagara region, I am writing today to urge you to veto Local Law 1-1 passed by the Erie County Legislature on February 2, 2006. Local Law 1-1 requires any contractor applying for county work to provide an apprentice-training program approved by NYS Department of Labor.

While the sponsor of this measure, Legislator Tim Kennedy, likely has the best intentions to improve the skills of the region's workforce, the ultimate consequences will prove detrimental to the region. First, Erie County cannot afford to pay higher rates for contracts. As previously reported in the *Buffalo News*, Schenectady was forced to pay an additional \$69,000 for a water project due to the elimination of competition through a similar apprenticeship requirement. This program simply increases costs of doing business in Buffalo Niagara and increases costs to the county and county taxpayers – at a time when we can least afford it.

Second, many small, non-union contractors – which include many minority and woman owned businesses – are not capable of providing these apprenticeship programs. Worse yet, they may not even qualify to establish apprenticeship programs under Department of Labor guidelines. Eliminating these and other companies from the competitive bid process puts their businesses – and thus the jobs of their employees -- at risk.

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership strongly urges a veto of Local Law 1-1. The negative impact of such a measure outweighs any potential benefits. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Rudnick

Cc: Erie County Legislature