



BUFFALO NIAGARA
PARTNERSHIP
Businesses United For Growth

July 25, 2006

Hon. David Franczyk
1315 City Hall
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Council President Franczyk:

On behalf of the 2,500 employer members of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, approximately 1,000 of which are operating in the City of Buffalo, I write to express opposition to a recommendation to reduce a 30% water rate discount for businesses. It is our understanding that the Common Council intends to send a recommendation on the matter to the Buffalo Water Authority today. In your deliberation on this matter, please strongly consider the detriment that adding to the cost of business in the City of Buffalo would cause.

Partnership members and volunteers continuously fight regulations, fees and tax proposals at every level of government that would further contribute to our region's cost of doing business (which is the 2nd costliest in the nation!). While the push to lower costs for residents is certainly an admirable goal and one that we share, it is an *investment* in business that will ultimately help city residents in more jobs and a stronger tax base – not the opposite.

While proponents demonize local businesses, saying “You can’t always worry about big business,” (*from the Buffalo News, July 24*), hand-in-hand with that characterization is the fact that these companies are also the city’s largest *taxpayers and employers!* Government has done its best as of late to alienate the businesses that are the foundation of our economy. The camel’s back is weakening with each straw.

When the City’s Commissioner of Economic Development, Permits and Inspection Services Richard Tobe visited the Partnership earlier this year, he told us his vision of the ability to present site selectors with low-cost water as an economic development tool, an idea our members received with enthusiasm. I would hate to see that possibility squelched via this proposed increase.

It’s no mystery why our residents have followed employment to the Carolinas and Arizona. Those areas have made an investment in business, which has led to – first and foremost – jobs, but also a larger tax base and a stronger economy. We have sadly been headed in the opposite direction, and such a change to water rates would be a continuance of that trend.

I urge you, in whatever your final recommendation is to the Water Authority regarding water rates, to consider the repercussions of adding another cost to the city’s employers.

Sincerely,



Andrew J. Rudnick
President & CEO