



March 30, 2023

Re: Final Budget Considerations

Dear Legislator:

As you negotiate the final state budget, the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, on behalf of its members who employ over a quarter million people in the region, offers the following considerations:

1. **Oppose Natural Gas Ban (TED Part WW).** Decarbonization must be done in a manner and at a pace that is practical and keeps energy affordable and reliable. The Governor's natural gas ban proposal does not achieve that balance. The BNP opposes all iterations of the natural gas ban, especially in existing buildings. Also, the Legislature's classification of buildings up to seven stories as "small buildings" that must be all-electric by 2025 is overly aggressive, and will encapsulate practically all construction in our region.
2. **Oppose Cap-and-Invest (TED Part AAA).** Cap-and-Invest would have a massive impact on our state economy, but many important details of the program are not addressed in the bill. The Legislature should not leave policy decisions of such important consequence to executive agencies. These considerations include who this law would apply to; what types of organizations would be exempt; how auctions would be conducted; how revenues would be distributed; and how carbon offsets would be treated. At the very least, Cap-and-Invest should be foregone until these details are determined, and both the Legislature and the public can develop a clearer understanding of the program's potential impact.
3. **Oppose the Climate Change Superfund proposal (TED Part JJJ).** This proposal would retroactively penalize employers for perceived contributions to climate change. In effect, it would slap employers with punitive fines for powering our way of life legally and under strict regulation. This nonsensical proposal would set a dangerous precedent, and it should not see the light of day.
4. **Oppose perpetual Minimum Wage increases (ELFA Part S).** Most Buffalo Niagara employers are already paying well above minimum wage due to market conditions. This policy will only harm nonprofits and other small employers who are struggling to pay current market wages. Raising the minimum wage before indexing it would be even more harmful to employers and result in more job losses.

5. **Support unemployment Insurance debt investment.** The BNP applauds the Legislature's attention to this issue. However, the state has funds to make a direct investment toward this debt, which would be preferable to bonding it. The federal government has shown no willingness to forgive the debt, and state leaders should stop using that possibility as a reason to forego state action.
6. **Oppose Good Cause Eviction.** While some tenant protections are necessary, using them to usher in a statewide rent control system would halt growth and housing development in our region. Ultimately, this legislation would lead to disinvestment in the rental landscape, which will harm both property owners and tenants. This proposal should be opposed.

Please keep these recommendations in mind as you consider voting for this year's state budget. Thank you in advance for your efforts to strengthen Buffalo Niagara.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dottie Gallagher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dottie Gallagher
President and CEO
Buffalo Niagara Partnership