



August 24, 2021

Governor Kathy Hochul  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

Congratulations on being sworn in as the 57<sup>th</sup> Governor of the State of New York.

It goes without saying that you assume office in a tumultuous time. Our state is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic damage. Employers across the state are struggling to stay afloat, and the scandals that have plagued Albany have inhibited the state's ability to respond to these challenges.

Difficult times require stable, competent leadership. The BNP has full confidence that you will provide this. Throughout your long career in public service, you have demonstrated an ability to govern effectively, and you have worked hard to learn about every corner of this state. You have been a friend to the BNP and the Buffalo Niagara region, and we are excited to see a Buffalonian move into the Executive Mansion.

As you take the reins, the BNP urges you to take the following actions this year to strengthen our economy and provide opportunities for workers across New York State:

- **Distribute Emergency Rental Assistance Program funds immediately.** The ERAP was designed to alleviate the substantial burden of rental arrears for tenants across New York. Additionally, the program provided needed revenue to landlords who were squeezed by the lengthy eviction moratorium. Unfortunately, the state has managed this program at a disappointingly slow pace. Instead of perpetually extending the eviction moratorium, the BNP urges you to make the efficient administration and rapid distribution of these funds a top priority.
- **Fight the pandemic without unnecessarily burdensome restrictions.** Last year's lockdowns devastated businesses in every community, and school closures prevented many parents from being able to work. We urge you to continue efforts to flatten the COVID-19 curve and prevent hospital overload. However, heavy-handed measures such as business restrictions or school closures would be damaging, ineffective, and unnecessary given our state's vaccination rate and the implementation of the NY HERO Act.
- **Stabilize the Unemployment Insurance system.** Due to widespread use of Unemployment Insurance, employers could experience significant UI rate increases if

Albany does not act to prevent it. S.6791/A.7788 would set fixed premium rates through 2024, so this bill should be a legislative priority. Also, the state could use American Rescue Plan funds to pay off the \$9 billion it borrowed from the federal government for the UI system. By making these changes, the state can protect employers from spiking premiums and stabilize the UI fund that was depleted through no fault of employers.

- **Provide parity in infrastructure and transportation funding.** The state budget, the American Rescue Plan, and the federal infrastructure package will provide substantial capital dollars for New York State. As these funds are allocated, it is essential that you provide parity between downstate and upstate so the Buffalo Niagara region has the resources it needs to flourish.
- **Include a Brownfield Cleanup Program extension in your upcoming executive budget proposal.** This program has been essential to the redevelopment of communities across New York, but especially in the Buffalo Niagara region. It finances needed environmental remediation projects, inspires exciting developments in our region, and puts dormant spaces back on the tax rolls. Because the program is set to expire next year, an extension is needed in the upcoming state budget.
- **Secure a public-private partnership for a new Buffalo Bills stadium.** As you know firsthand, the Buffalo Bills are central to our community's culture. The team and league have made it clear that building a new stadium is necessary for the Bills to stay in the region. The state must play a leadership role in negotiating a reasonable public-private partnership to finance a new stadium and ensure the Bills remain in Buffalo long-term. The BNP understands this negotiation will be complex and scrutinized, but we urge you to lead decisively and urgently to secure a new agreement that serves all stakeholders and continues the long and proud history of Buffalo and Western New York being home to an NFL franchise.

Focusing on these issues as you begin your tenure will immediately strengthen our state. The BNP stands ready to provide more information as needed.

Again, congratulations on your ascension to Governor. The BNP wishes you well and looks forward to working with you to build a better, stronger New York.

Sincerely,



Dottie Gallagher  
President & CEO  
Buffalo Niagara Partnership