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GEORGE D. MAZIARZ
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May 23, 2013

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I applaud the proposal you have put forth for "Tax-Free NY" as I believe conceptually this is the type of bold initiative we need to jump start the Upstate economy and ultimately create good paying jobs for our community. Clearly, there are many details that need to be worked out and I look forward to assisting you in any manner possible as you further develop this plan.

To that end, I write today about the how your proposal could be a game-changer for Niagara Falls as it relates to the former Rainbow Mall. As you are well aware, the recently-opened Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, which is part of Niagara County Community College (NCCC), currently owns about 90,000 square feet of the former mall. That leaves about 200,000 square feet of space available for development right in the heart of Niagara Falls.

Empire State Development, through its USA Niagara subsidiary, engaged the Urban Land Institute last fall to make suggestions on how best to develop the rest of the former Rainbow Mall site. Just recently, Niagara USA put forth an RFQ to determine what interest there might be from the development community to follow through on these ideas. They are currently in the midst of that process.

However, if I understand your proposal correctly, up to 200,000 square feet of space adjacent to any of the state's 64 SUNY campuses would qualify for "Tax-Free NY." That would mean the rest of the mall could qualify for the program based on adjacency to the Culinary Institute. Knowing of your strong interest and efforts to revitalize downtown Niagara Falls, I believe that the Rainbow Mall could become the initial signature project of your "Tax-Free NY" program. Clearly, this new strategy coupled with 8 million tourists annually would afford us a tremendous opportunity to attract national business ventures to Niagara Falls.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and Empire State Development Regional President Sam Hoyt. I am very excited about the possibilities "Tax-Free NY" could potentially bring to our region and I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George D. Maziarz".
George D. Maziarz
Senator, 62nd District