



*Testimony before the New Economy and Quality of Life Committee*

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I want to thank the Chairman and the Committee for the opportunity to have the Michigan Economic Developers Association (MEDA) and its members address the Committee and give their perspectives on Michigan's Economic Development effort.

MEDA is a 50-year-old non-profit association providing education and information to its 470 members.

With membership Representing 72 counties in both urban and rural areas, MEDA members have a unique perspective. They are on the frontline in our communities working day-to-day with business owners & operators.

As you know the recent economic recession combined with the globalization of the world's economy has dramatically impacted

Michigan. And as the economy stabilizes and begins to recover we need to continue to look to position Michigan to take advantage of the coming recovery.

Like most successful local economic development organizations the State needs to have continuity and be consistent in its efforts. With a new administration and extensive turnover in the legislature coming in 2011 we wish to caution against scrapping our state economic development effort and starting over. Taking six to 12 months to figure out what we should do or looking for a silver bullet solution will place us behind the recovery curve.

To that point we are in the beginning stages of developing a white paper that will make recommendations on what the State's economic development effort should look like and identify opportunities to improve our business climate, hopefully avoiding any period of time without a State economic development strategy.

We will be publishing this white paper this fall and would be happy to share it with the Committee.

Over the next several weeks you'll hear from members from southwestern Michigan, southeastern Michigan, mid Michigan and today, northern Michigan. They will be sharing with you what works

and what needs to be improved or changed, as well as, what is impacting their regions.

We hope this will give the Committee a better understanding of the importance of a consistent state effort and the implications if the State's economic development effort goes dark.

At this point I would like to introduce the economic developers from Northern Michigan who will be testifying today:

Andy Hayes, President, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance

Jim Hendricks, Executive Director, Sault St. Marie Economic Development Corporation

Dennis West, President, Northern Initiatives

And

Tino Briethaupt, Senior Vice President of Economic Development, the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce who will be speaking first.