



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Darrel J. Aubertine

## **Aubertine: Put Upstate Funding to Work Upstate Now**

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April 13, 2009

### **Senator and colleagues call for release of blueprint, agriculture and city by city funds**

WATERTOWN (April 14, 2009)—State Sen. Darrel J. Aubertine today called on Gov. David A. Paterson to put the remaining funds—especially those dedicated to agriculture and upstate cities—from the 2008-09 state budget's \$700 million Upstate Revitalization Fund to work for our Upstate economy.

Last week, the Upstate Democratic Caucus and Senate Majority Leader sent a letter asking Gov. Paterson to release \$120 million for the Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund. Today, Sen. Aubertine, the chair of the caucus, the Senate Agriculture Committee and the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, renewed this call with his Upstate Democratic colleagues, asking the governor to also release what remains of a \$40 million pot for agriculture and \$30 million for projects in small cities.

“These are unused upstate development funds that would mean jobs, infrastructure upgrades, investments and most of all, more jobs in Upstate New York,” Sen. Aubertine said. “With new leadership in the Senate, we have an opportunity to do more than just talk about improving our upstate economy and releasing this funding would be a great first step. We must position Upstate New York for a 21st Century economy with thoughtful, focused and long term strategies for development.”

The \$120 million Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund is intended to be available for Upstate communities of all sizes to apply for downtown projects and business-related infrastructure development.

The \$40 million allocated for Upstate Agribusiness Fund was modified in the 09-10 Enacted Budget, with \$10 million allocated for the Healthy Foods, Healthy Communities initiative. The Agribusiness fund was originally intended to allow capital for on farm investments by Upstate farmers, and to make investments in agribusiness expansion and Upstate New York's food processing sectors.

The \$30 million in the City by City Initiative were additional funds created to make tactical, one time investments in strategic economic development projects throughout Upstate New York.

“Healthy Foods, Health Communities is a start, but we can use this funding to give our farmers the capital they need to reinvest in their farms and not only survive, but become part of new economic development opportunities, like alternative energy,” Sen. Aubertine said. “Agriculture is the foundation of our Upstate economy. It generates wealth throughout our rural areas and feeds into many other industries that provide much needed jobs. We’ve already set this money aside and we need to act now for Upstate New York in this time of need.”

The Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund emanated from a massive initiative by the Empire State Development Corporation to assess the needs and strengths of the Upstate regions to create an economic development and investment strategy that would revitalize the Upstate economy.

The Upstate Regional Blueprint Fund would be a long term strategic approach to creating a more business friendly environment for Upstate NY which will result in more jobs, attract new families, and stem the flight of our children to other states. The release of this funding would supplement the Federal Stimulus money already creating jobs throughout Upstate New York.