

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

August 3, 2020

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
State of New York
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Thank you, again, for your administration's continued efforts throughout this COVID-19 response and, in particular moving forward, we welcome ongoing opportunities to share specific challenges and concerns from within the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions we represent..

Toward that end, we would like to direct your attention to a specific concern that has been brought to our attention by regional business leaders.

Currently, the travel advisory is one of your administration's primary efforts to contain the pandemic and protect the positive trajectory that New York State and our local regions have achieved in controlling its spread.

While we understand the need for caution behind the advisory and its accompanying quarantine requirement, we also strongly urge you to take into full consideration the potentially severe economic consequences for regions like ours that border another state, in this case Pennsylvania, where there is a daily influx of out-of-state workers essential to our local economies.

We have just received the attached letter from the Chemung County and the Greater Corning Area chambers of commerce. It directly expresses the potential urgency of this regional alarm.

Their letter states, in part, "Although we understand the importance of a travel advisory to prevent the spread of this pandemic, we implore you to advocate on behalf of specific guidelines and exemptions for residents of Pennsylvania who work in New York's Southern Tier Region as well as consideration of specific county test results. As the guidance currently stands, should future test rates for the entire state of Pennsylvania require quarantine, this would be catastrophic to both our workforce and employers."

The letter further details that a significant portion of the Southern Tier workforce resides in Pennsylvania. It is estimated that nearly 3,000 Pennsylvania residents are employed by businesses located across the border in Chemung County alone. Overall, approximately 9,500 Pennsylvania residents work within the Southern Tier region. Likewise, more than 6,300 residents of the Southern Tier work in Pennsylvania.

In short, it is clear that this reality of across-the-border employment is fundamental to our local economies and regional economic success – and it must be taken into account throughout the implementation of New York State's travel advisory.

If, for example, the state of Pennsylvania is added to your travel advisory largely because of coronavirus spikes in large cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (while border counties remain stable), it would cause further devastation to the Southern Tier economy.

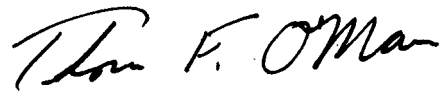
Consequently, we appreciate this opportunity to urge you to be pro-active on this consideration and, anticipating a worst-case scenario, immediately work to clarify this concern for employers and workers and, especially, devise protocols that will continue to accommodate across-the-border employment. In fact, we have read the recent reports that you have provided an exemption from the travel advisory/quarantine for New Jersey residents and believe that residents and workers from New York's other border states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Vermont should be provided a similar exemption.

As our local business leaders note, "There must be a way to allow the workforce just across the border to work safely and effectively here in New York."

We strongly agree and we appreciate your careful consideration of this request. If we can provide additional information, answer any questions or help facilitate further discussions of this concern with our local business leaders, please contact us.

We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom F. O'Mara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "O'Mara" clearly legible.

Thomas F. O'Mara
58th Senate District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frederick J. Akshar II". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Frederick" and last name "Akshar" clearly legible, followed by "II".

Frederick J. Akshar II
52nd Senate District

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George M. Borrello". The signature is cursive and stylized, with the first name "George" and last name "Borrello" clearly legible.

George M. Borrello
57th Senate District



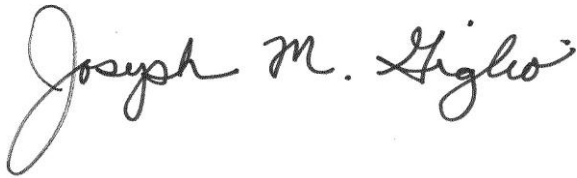
Philip A. Palmesano
132nd Assembly District



Christopher S. Friend
124th Assembly District



Marjorie Byrnes
133rd Assembly District



Assemblyman Joseph M. Giglio
148th Assembly District

cc: Eric Gertler, President and CEO, Empire State Development