

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Hearing on HB 2006
Thursday, January 31, 2019

Written Only Statement – Neutral
by Dick Carter, Jr.
Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce

Chair Tarwater and Members of the Committee:

The Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce believes that State economic development depends on a balanced and competitive business environment. Efforts should be made at the state level to ensure that economic development incentive programs remain up-to-date with industry needs while engaging the local community to share in the cost of the investment. We believe that programs such as HPIP, PEAK and STAR Bonds have served as effective tools in the economic developer's tool box.

The Chamber believes it is important to review and evaluate incentive programs which utilize public and private partnerships; however, we are concerned that certain portions of HB 2006 could have a negative impact on the ability to recruit or retain companies, should sensitive data be required to be made public via a searchable database.

Economic development has become a very competitive at the local, regional, and national levels. Provisions of the bill in New Section 1 would establish a date threshold of July 1, 2019, which seems to protect agreements that have been executed before that date. There appears to be no protection for agreements approved or executed after that date, which could include the disclosure of sensitive taxpayer information.

The Chamber wishes to continue working with the Legislature, Department of Commerce and other appropriate state agencies to find solutions that ensure economic development programs are working toward their designed potential. We remain committed to working through this process so that we might be able to support a legislative work product that achieves the ability to monitor and measure the progress of incentives without damaging the working relationships we have with corporate partners.