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SUSPENSION TO
FINANCE &
MGMT.

February 4, 1999

Erie County Legislature
25 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202

Attn: The Honorable Crystal D. Peoples, Majority Leader
The Honorable Frederick J. Marshall, Minority Leader

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I enclose herewith for your consideration a draft Local Law that would effect a change of county name from Erie County to Buffalo County.

Throughout America, struggling regions, their governments, and their people are finding ways to break from tired practices of the past and embrace urban-suburban collaboration. Ample evidence now exists that vast rewards of increased jobs and equitable economic growth inure to those willing to pull together toward region-wide prosperity.

As you know, our pace toward regional cooperation has been less rapid. Efforts to incorporate regional thinking into local law have met with varying degrees of success. All the while time, and perhaps history, passes us by.

Against this backdrop, I offer a symbolic step. But one that may serve to unite our region, clarify our identity, strengthen our magnificent City of Buffalo, and, at century's end, honor those Buffalo citizens who sustained the city through a challenging hundred years.

By re-naming our county Buffalo County, we acknowledge our commitment to the region's centerpiece, and affirm to the world that the era of our being hesitant to tell our story and celebrate our heritage is over. We are the Buffalo-Niagara Region. In man-made and God-given landscape we are

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without parallel. And in inclusive and humane sensibilities that have always defined Western New Yorkers, we are without parallel.

Kindly note that I propose a permissive referendum to ratify the change, as well as a financing mechanism to avoid attendant public expense. I would be pleased to assist in any way I can in private fundraising.

Our region faces serious policy challenges. Having had the privilege of working with you on the Legislature's noble contributions in social and human services, county health care facilities, and our duty to construct proper court facilities for future generations, I am aware of larger matters that confront us than our name.

But in working with regional thinkers around our nation, I have learned of the powerful tool that clear identity can be in creating attraction and appeal. Our identity should be our city. Buffalo sustained us through a challenging century, and will carry us to a prosperous tomorrow.

In this spirit, I propose this Local Law, and offer all of my energy and spirit to assist you in seeing it adopted.

Very truly yours,



Kevin P. Gaughan

Enclosures



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the
citistates
group LLC

February 2, 1999

To Kevin P. Gaughan

I am intrigued by the proposal to give the name of Buffalo County to today's Erie County, the urban family of Buffalo city and its suburban neighbors.

The metropolitan regions destined for greatness in the next century will be that stand out from the pack, exhibiting verve, self-confidence, boldness. The name change to Buffalo County would say to the world: Erie's a great lake, but we're a great citistate. We're proud of who we are, we believe we'll thrive and advance in the next century, and we want everyone to know it.

I bet the world would take note -- very positive note.

Neal Peirce
Author-Journalist
Chairman, The Citistates Group

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February 2, 1999

Kevin Gaughn, Esq.
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Hamburg, N.Y. 14075

Dear Kevin,

I am pleased to write on behalf of your initiative to change the name of *Erie County* to *Buffalo County*. It is a timely proposal — contributing to the growing efforts underway in Greater Buffalo to promote regional cooperation — and an important one for the economic future of your region.

I led a similar effort in Philadelphia in 1995, when we set out to change the informal designation of our region from the *Delaware Valley* to *Greater Philadelphia* or to another wording, provided only that the name *Philadelphia* appeared as part of it.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the initiative we proposed to the 2,000 business, civic, and political leaders who gathered in May, 1995, at the *Call to Action Conference* that my Center organized. Our "Renaming the Region" proposal was among 89 initiatives, collected in the *Greater Philadelphia Investment Portfolio*, that shared the common goal of advancing the interests of our region.

The basic arguments we developed to promote the name change are entirely consistent with your effort and reflect your reasoning. The first of these is purely economic, recognizing that the future will be very different than the past. When historians chronicle the story of the last quarter of the 20th century, they will conclude with unanimity that its defining phenomenon was the emergence of a global economy. As you well understand, regions are the units of competition in this global economy. It's as if a great train were about to pass through every region in the world. Each region has to determine whether it will build a station — and decide on the kind of station it will build — to get on and off that train.

Each region must also decide what to call the station stop. Your region is know best by the name of its core city — *Buffalo*. It makes absolute strategic sense to rename Erie County so that the identity it projects in the global economy is what is most recognizable.

The second reason for changing the name of the county is more controversial, but I believe equally important. Regions with healthy central cities will do better in the global economy, all things being equal, than regions whose central cities are in decline. Indeed, as I go around the country speaking to corporate groups about the need for regional cooperation, I call "stabilizing the central city" one of the four challenges every region must confront.

Kevin Gaughn, Esq.
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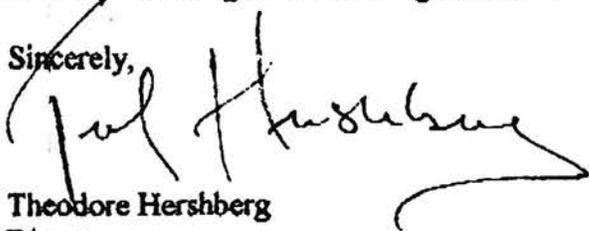
I have argued that most American cities, particularly the older cities in the Midwest and the Northeast, are on greased skids. What distinguishes one from the other is the angle of descent. Ed Rendell, Philadelphia's popular mayor who pulled the city back from the brink of bankruptcy, put it this way: "When I was elected, I inherited a patient suffering from a gun shot wound and cancer. I have successfully addressed the gun shot wound, but the patient is still dying of cancer." The fact is that no matter how squeaky clean the good government machine mayors make their cities, the cost of the social problems that now reside inside city borders is greater than the sum of all resources (local, state and federal) currently available to address these problems. In short, without outside intervention, the future prospects for cities, despite all the hype about how they are coming back, are not bright. Watch what happens after the next business recession.

In the Philadelphia story, I came to understand how the name "Delaware Valley" poorly served the interests of the city and the region because it "sanitized" the region's identity. Each time suburban residents hear the name of the region they are not reminded that the core city at the heart of their region is Philadelphia — a city in trouble, a city that needs their help.

By referring to Erie County by the name of the great old city that lies at its core, everyone will be reminded that they are part of the Buffalo region and that the core city that anchors their region's identity and economy needs their help.

I wish you very well with this timely and insightful renaming initiative.

Sincerely,



Theodore Hershberg
Director
Professor, Public Policy and History

RENAMING THE REGION

Raising the region's identity in the global economy

There is a growing movement to stop using the term *Delaware Valley* to describe our region and start using a phrase that contains *Philadelphia* — the region's strongest identity in the global economy.

Virtually every newcomer to our region asks, "Why is this area called the *Delaware Valley*? I never heard of it before I came here." Answers span the "geographic" (because the Delaware River runs through the region), the "political" (many suburban residents dislike Philadelphia so much that a euphemism was created to avoid use of the city's name), and the "historical" (according to David Boldt, former editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Edgar Williams coined the phrase in 1952 for Walter Annenberg, former owner of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, because the Philadelphia Bulletin had the name *Greater Philadelphia* "sewn up").

Whatever the reason, the time has come to stop calling the region the *Delaware Valley* because in strategic terms it makes no sense. Consider the following arguments:

- No map identifies the region as the *Delaware Valley*. No matter how diligently foreign investors or tourists search the maps or indexes of international atlases, no listing for the *Delaware Valley* will be found. The place simply does not exist.
- It is counter-productive. Using it actually advertises the name of a neighboring state, *Delaware*, with which our region often competes for jobs and economic activities.
- In a global economy, we should adopt a name for our region that includes *Philadelphia* within it for a simple, factual reason: to the extent that our region is known across the world, it is known by the name of *Philadelphia*.

Residents of the region should think of the global economy as a new and powerful train coming through the region. Thousands of forward-looking businesses, organizations and people are now actively engaged in building a station — our link to the global economy — that will make it possible for travelers and local folks to get on or off the train. Now which sign should we erect on the station noting the name of the train stop: the *Delaware Valley* — that no one outside of the region knows and that cannot be found on a map; or *Greater Philadelphia* (or some other formulation) — that contains the name of the city which is the birthplace of America and which is recognized around the globe?

In strategic terms, it makes good, sound economic sense to adopt a name for this region that includes *Philadelphia* in it. The Center for Greater Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania has begun discussions with the region's broadcast media to move this initiative forward. Although **RENAMING THE REGION** requires no financial investment or legislative action, a new name for the region will emerge only with the cooperation of several active partners:

- The print and broadcast media, first and foremost, must stop using the name Delaware Valley.
- The 117 or more organizations that now use the term Delaware Valley in their title might consider changing their names.
- Business professionals and others that represent the region nationally and abroad should be ambassadors for metropolitan Philadelphia not the Delaware Valley.
- Tourism professionals should not confuse visitors by using the term Delaware Valley.
- Citizens of this region should not unwittingly add to the identity confusion in their everyday speech.

We welcome the heated exchange of views this initiative is likely to stimulate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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PROPOSED NAME CHANGE

ERIE COUNTY TO BUFFALO COUNTY

BACKGROUND

The regionalism movement now sweeping America addresses three aspects of the human condition: political, economic, and spiritual. Its political aim is to increase government collaboration; its economic goal is region-wide prosperity born of renewed urban investment and sustainable suburban growth; and its spiritual end is to remind urban and suburban citizens of their united interests and shared future.

The arrival of the global economy, and the inception of regions as economic operating units, rendered these goals essential. To compete for jobs and growth, a region can no longer compete with itself – city vs. suburb, town vs. village – but must be unified enough to compete, collaborate, and trade with counterparts throughout the world.

Regions accomplish this by conveying a clear identity, coordinated purpose, and unique benefits. And in our “.com” age of distilling complex ideas to their essence for easy communication, eliminating unnecessary messages, layers, or symbols is the key to clarity.

PROPOSAL

To sharpen our national identity, acknowledge the City of Buffalo as our region’s centerpiece, and affirm our commitment to strengthening our magnificent urban core, I propose that we change the name of Erie County to Buffalo County.

This name change would put us on a par with the cities of New York, the center of New York County; Albany, which sits in Albany County; and Niagara Falls, the core of Niagara County.

IDENTITY BENEFITS

In this regional age, Western New York's challenge is to develop a strong and attractive identity that evokes a clear sense of who we are and for what we stand. The unique story and sense of place that is Buffalo provides us with a singular character that sets us apart.

That heritage should be honored and celebrated. And that character should inform the identity we convey to America and the world.

Changing our county name to Buffalo would be a powerful symbolic gesture of regional unity and purpose. It would eliminate a local government name with which so few identify, without eliminating the government level from which so many benefit. And it would remind residents of every town and suburb that we are one with our urban center – beneficiaries of its success, diminished by its failures, and responsible for its well being.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

As our business community already recognizes through its selection of the name "Buffalo Niagara Partnership," those identities together constitute our strongest argument for attention and appeal. In the rapidly moving marketplace of the global village, conveying two ideas is all we can do. We should not obscure them with an unnecessary third.

In addition, as more state and federal assistance programs require collaboration from local government applicants, absence of cooperation between government levels is unacceptable. Perhaps a shared city and county name will encourage that collaboration – if only as a psychological matter.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS TO EFFECT NAME CHANGE

A review of Article 9, Sec. 1(h) (relating to county charters), and Sec. 2 (relating to general local law power), of the NYS Constitution suggests that no state legislature action is required to effect a change of county name.

I have prepared a draft Local Law and forwarded it to the Majority and Minority leaders of the Erie County Legislature (kindly see attached Schedule A). Please note that to invest a name change decision with the integrity of citizen approval, I recommend that the question be put to a county-wide referendum.

COSTS

To insure that Erie County taxpayers incur no expenses related to change of name signs, offices, documents, stationary, etc., I propose that a consortium of local corporations and community foundations bear the costs.

In the course of attracting over \$400,000 from local sources to support community renewal and reform initiatives during the past four years, I have established strong relationships with several philanthropic organizations. I would be honored to lead an effort to obtain the necessary private funds to avoid any public expense.

HONORING LAKE ERIE

Having grown up on Erie's shores, and swam and sailed her waters all my life, I know its central importance to our collective psyche. And the most meaningful way we can honor it is by finally developing its waterfront, and summoning the will and wherewithal to vest it with public amenities accessible to all.

CONCLUSION

America has entered a post-suburban age. Inter-changeable suburbs with indistinguishable feel no longer hold the imagination of our nation's emerging multi-cultural society.

The unique sensibilities of a central city – formed in its history, expressed in its architecture, and celebrated in its spirit – will carry successful regions into the new century. Buffalo and Western New York should be among them.

COUNTY OF ERIE

LOCAL LAW NO. _____ - 1999

LOCAL LAW INTRO NO. _____ - 1999

A LOCAL LAW, amending Erie County Local Law No. 1-1959, as amended, constituting the Erie County Charter, by inserting a new Section 101 of Article I.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Article I of Local Law No.1-1959, as amended, constituting the Erie County Charter, is hereby further amended by the insertion of a new Section 101 to read as follows:

Section 101. County Name. The name of the County of Erie is hereby changed to the County of Buffalo.

Section 2. The numerical headings of all other sections of Article I of Local Law 1-1959, as amended, shall be changed to the next successive number to reflect the addition of the new Section 101.

Section 3. To avoid any cost to taxpayers resulting from the change of office signs, lettering, county facilities, publication or re-issuing of county documents, papers, and letterhead, as well as creation of new local maps to reflect this change of name, the County of Erie is hereby authorized to accept philanthropic grants equal to the amount necessary to effect this change of name on all county buildings and in all official county documents; such amount to be determined by the Office of County Comptroller and verified by an independent accounting firm.

Section 4. This amendment shall be submitted for approval of the electors at a special or general election to be held not less than ___ days following adoption of this amendment and the change of county name from Erie County to Buffalo County shall be effected upon its approval by the affirmative vote of a majority of qualified electors of the county voting upon this amendment.