

NJBIA

AT ISSUE *By Melanie Willoughby, Senior Vice President*

A Vision for Economic Growth

Our state's businesses have been through a lot over the last two years. We've seen the near meltdown of our financial system and the most severe recession in our lifetimes. Many businesses have gone under. Others drew upon every ounce of resourcefulness they could find just to survive. Even so, New Jersey still lost nearly 250,000 private-sector jobs.

Hopefully, the worst is behind us, and we can begin the critical task of rebuilding our economy. The business community has an unprecedented opportunity to impact policy at the state level. If there is one silver lining to the recession, it is that policymakers are focused on business and economic issues like never before. We have a new Governor whose central campaign plank was changing New Jersey's anti-business reputation and we also have new legislative leaders, who have made creating jobs a top priority.

To help guide policymakers on how to revitalize New Jersey's private-sector economy, NJBIA, with input from hundreds of member companies, has developed a plan called ***Vision for a Better Business Climate***.

The formula for a better business climate is straightforward. Lower the cost of doing business. Enact programs to create jobs and grow the economy. Improve government processes. Policy initiatives aimed at improving our economy should provide tangible steps to achieving one or more of these goals.

Vision for a Better Business Climate is filled with positive ideas for tax relief and reform, regulatory reform and economic development incentives. All of these ideas come from suggestions from NJBIA member companies, so they reflect the issues and concerns that employers are coping with in this tough economy. It also shows what policies lawmakers should avoid to prevent our business climate from getting worse, such as job-killing tax increases, costly workplace mandates, and new legal liabilities for businesses.

Some of these issues are familiar. Take a look at the section on taxes. It recommends adopting the single-sales-factor corporate tax model to stop penalizing New Jersey companies for creating jobs in New Jersey, increasing the manufacturing tax credit for investing in equipment and facilities, and eliminating the sales tax rebate procedure in the Urban Enterprise Zone program.

Other issues are already being pursued. The "Improving Government Processes" section includes recommendations for regulatory reform, such as reforming the process by which regulations are adopted and requiring compelling reasons for exceeding federal standards. The Lt. Governor's office is leading the fight to reform the rule-making process, and the chairman of the Assembly Regulatory Oversight Committee, John Burzichelli, has introduced legislation requiring agencies to get legislative authority before adopting regulations that exceed federal standards.



> *Vision for a Better Business Climate* is the road map that will make **New Jersey an economic powerhouse** in the East.

Vision for a Better Business Climate also includes new ideas, such as creating growth zones with significant economic growth incentives within urban areas, and creating new partnerships with higher education to develop new ideas and technologies that will pay off economically down the road. The list goes on.

Vision for a Better Business Climate is a broad-based agenda, pulling together the policy changes that NJBIA believes need to take place to make New Jersey the kind of state in which businesses want to operate. NJBIA has detailed policy ideas ready to go and looks forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to achieve these important goals.

Not long ago, New Jersey was an economic powerhouse in the East and a leader in creating jobs. We believe it can be again. ***Vision for a Better Business Climate*** is designed to be the road map that gets us there. Download the full report at www.njbja.org/vision or contact Kelly Ryan at 609-393-7707, ext. 223. **NJB**