



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Gov. Cuomo Signs Bill to Promote Main Street Growth in Livingston County

CATHARINE YOUNG September 29, 2011

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MT. MORRIS – State representatives today called Governor Cuomo’s signing of their tax abatement bill a “victory” for Livingston County that will drive economic revitalization and job growth in downtowns across the region.

Inspired by initiatives that have restored vacant storefronts and historic buildings in the Village of Mt. Morris, bringing new jobs and development, the new law will allow any local government or school district in the county to opt into a tax abatement program, incentivizing private investment in communities.

This legislation was sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) and Patrick Gallivan (R,C,I – Depew), and Assemblyman Daniel Burling (R,C – Warsaw).

“Our downtowns are the hearts and souls of our communities, yet many need to be revitalized to restore historical buildings, attract small business and fill vacant storefronts. Economic growth and jobs are our greatest priority. This tax abatement incentive is another tool in the toolbox for economic development,” said Senator Young.

“I am pleased that Governor Cuomo signed this important economic development and job growth bill into law. This pro-growth tax-abatement program will help attract investors and businesses into our local downtowns and bring long-term, private-sector jobs to Main Streets in Livingston County. I am pleased to have worked with Senator Young, Livingston County officials, and community partners in crafting this legislation to bring job creators and economic growth to Western New York,” said Assemblyman Burling.

Senator Gallivan said, “Main streets across upstate New York are hurting, and as they go, go our communities. This tax-abatement legislation provides for immediate and targeted property tax relief for small businesses, will revitalize once vibrant central business districts, and create sustainable job in our communities. I thank Governor Cuomo for his cooperation in seeing this important legislation enacted.”

The new law provides for a property tax exemption for any local government or school district in the county with a 12-year phase-in for properties located in designated benefit areas that are converted, created, modernized, rehabilitated or expanded. The bill does not create any new spending at the state or local level. Instead, it attracts private investment and private sector jobs.

Senator Young and Assemblyman Burling said they were approached by Livingston County officials for assistance with the initiative because state law didn’t allow for the same tax abatements that New York City is allowed to offer.

Five communities, including Mt. Morris, Dansville, Nunda, Lima and Geneseo, have shown their interest in taking advantage of a tax abatement program by passing local laws that will allow them to participate.

In the Village of Mt. Morris, Greg O'Connell, a successful community developer from Brooklyn who serves on the SUNY Geneseo College Council, has helped to transform downtown Mt. Morris by rehabilitating 20 buildings. Tax abatement incentives have been successful in New York City where Mr. O'Connell has restored over a million square feet of previously vacant and forgotten properties.

"They are calling it the 'Miracle in Mt. Morris' because we were able to utilize Main Street grants to transform the downtown district. Greg O'Connell has invested so much of his time and energy to transform the Village and we want to spread that type of impact to Main Streets all across the county," said Senator Young.

Assemblyman Sean Hanna (R,C,I-Mendon) said, "I am pleased to see that a reduction in property taxes on job creators, legislation which I strongly supported, was recently signed into law by Governor Cuomo. This property-tax abatement for downtown areas can stimulate new business investment, spur jobs and create economic growth in Livingston County. This is exactly the type of approach and attitude state government should be taking toward business. I was happy to see the Governor make this overdue pro-jobs legislation a reality."

Patrick Rountree, Livingston County's Economic Development Director, said, "Livingston County is grateful to Senators Young and Gallivan and Assemblyman Burling for engaging themselves in this county's local revitalization efforts. We sought to replicate proven urban techniques that facilitate new business investment but also to scale these approaches to the unique size and nature of our rural communities. They listened, met with business owners and investors, drafted the legislation and then fought hard to win the support of their respective houses and the approval of the Governor."

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