

**From: Association for a Better Long Island**

Contact: Rubenstein

Gary Lewi 516 316-0579 glewi@rubenstein.com

***For Immediate Release – May 4, 2020***

**ABLI CALLS FOR THE SUSPENSION OF LOCAL ZONING CONTROL TO BE INCLUDED IN NY FOWARD PLAN TO RESTART ECONOMY**

***As Region Teeters On The Edge of a Recession, Creation of Economic Empowerment Zones Will Spur Economic Development, Create Thousands of Jobs & Address Long Island's Critical Needs***

***ABLI: During Unprecedented Times, Unprecedented Bold Actions Are Needed To Prevent Total Economic Peril***

Following a call with Governor Andrew Cuomo’s leading economic recovery advisors, via letter, the Association for a Better Long Island (ABLI) is urging the co-chairs of the NY Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board, tasked with developing a plan to restart the economy, to consider leveraging the state's disaster declaration powers to suspend local zoning control to create targeted economic development zones on Long Island designed to rebuild a COVID-19 ravaged economy.  
  
In speaking to former NYS secretaries Steven M. Cohen and William J. Mulrow, co-chairs of the NY Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board, a co-founder of the ABLI, Ed Blumenfeld, observed, “The Governor has done an extraordinary job in using his emergency powers to significantly reduce the death toll from of a disastrous pandemic. The next challenge will be how best to rebuild an economy that is now teetering on the edge of an historic recession.”  
   
In a letter to Co-Chairs Cohen & Mulrow, ABLI Founder Ed Blumenfeld requested that the Advisory Board, while formulating the NY Forward Plan, strongly consider the creation of economic empowerment zones (“EEZs”) to spur economic development, create thousands jobs, attract tens of millions in investment dollars and produce tax revenue that has all but disappeared in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am advised that the Governor currently has the power to amend or suspend regulations, so long as those actions directly assist the state in its disaster response.  There is little doubt, the creation of EEZs will assist the state in its ability to rebuild the economy.  Specifically, EEZs designate targeted areas where development would address critical needs, including transit-oriented development to address our lack of multifamily housing, and suspend local zoning control to expedite approvals,” explained the ABLI leader.  
  
Blumenfeld says the action would remove the traditional NIMBY reactions that deter local elected officials from approving transformative projects that Long Island desperately needs now.  Instead, within each EEZ there would be a designated group of key stakeholders to ensure community needs and concerns are addressed.  
   
“The economic landscape that previously existed on Long Island and throughout New York State doesn’t exist any longer. It requires vision, political will, and a commitment to `New York Tough’ to prevent COVID-19 from destroying our shared future. The Governor’s actions during this crisis have revealed to everyone that he has all three attributes in very large quantities,” concluded Blumenfeld.  
  
The Association for a Better Long Island (ABLI) is the region’s leading economic development organization.  Its mission is to protect, improve and strengthen the LI economy by advocating on behalf of sensible growth, affordable energy, a reduced tax burden, investment in infrastructure and related issues that enhance the quality of life for all Long Island, thereby protecting the region’s economic future.