



August 23, 2011

**PPG**



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Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
Capitol Building  
Albany NY 12224

Re: Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation Board Vacancies

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The Partnership for the Public Good unites 95 non-profit organizations and community groups working to revitalize Buffalo. One of our partners' top priorities is a Canal Side project in downtown Buffalo that truly benefits the community.

As you know, the Canal Side project in downtown Buffalo is one of the most important projects in our region and involves public investment of over \$150 million. Currently, the board of the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation has two vacancies. We are writing to request that you appoint two members who represent Buffalo's diversity and who will advocate vigorously to make sure that public dollars are spent only for the public good.

The current voting members of the ECHDC board are all white and, in many ways, do not reflect Buffalo's many voices, needs, and wishes adequately. Plainly, the ECHDC needs some fresh voices on its board. We recommend that you appoint Duane Diggs and Stephanie Simeon,

Duane Diggs is currently the president of VOICE Buffalo, a faith based community organizing group, and a member of the Gamaliel Foundation's African American Leadership Council. He has represented VOICE Buffalo in the Canal Side Community Alliance, serving as one of three lead negotiators working on behalf of 61 community groups to improve the Canal Side project.

Stephanie Simeon is the executive director of Heart of the City Neighborhoods, a non-profit doing housing and community renewal on Buffalo's upper west side. As a successful community developer with a masters degree in urban planning and as an African-American woman, Stephanie brings important skills and experiences currently missing from the ECHDC board.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. Please feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

Sam Magavern  
Co-Director  
Partnership for the Public Good

CC: Sam Hoyt, Empire State Development Corporation