



Opening Statement
Assembly Budget Committee

May 21, 2018

Chairman Pintor Marin, Members of the Budget Committee...the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) appreciates the opportunity to testify today. Along with our President and Chief Operating Officer Tim Lizura, who is here with me, we are pleased to provide you with a brief update related to our efforts to grow the State's economy and help carry out Governor Murphy's vision for a stronger and fairer New Jersey economy.

With support from the Legislature and under Governor Murphy's leadership, the EDA is reenergizing and strengthening our focus on key strategies to help build strong and dynamic communities and create good jobs for New Jersey residents.

To that end, we have created a new Office of Economic Transformation, which is charged with developing and implementing initiatives that will enhance the State's long-term economic competitiveness within key strategic sectors, including clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and technology and life sciences. Through this office, the EDA will partner with industry, labor and workforce development leaders, entrepreneurs, and government stakeholders to analyze and remove bottlenecks to growth and support new business formation and expansion.

This new office supports our overall vision for the EDA moving forward. It is a strategy aimed at making New Jersey a national model for inclusive and sustainable economic development, with a concentration on several vital areas, including:

- Reclaiming New Jersey's position as the center of invention and innovation;
- Accelerating the growth of clean energy jobs and businesses;
- Strengthening collaboration between academia and industry;
- Leveraging existing assets to help our cities become engines of economic opportunity;

- Creating good jobs for New Jersey residents by unlocking the full potential of our human capital; and,
- Ensuring tax incentive programs align with these priorities and maximize the state's return on investment.

We know that a successful innovation economy requires strong public-private partnerships and a focus on three key areas: talent, capital, and real estate. "The Hub" initiative in New Brunswick, announced by Governor Murphy in March, embodies this concept and is indicative of our approach to jumpstarting New Jersey's innovation economy. We believe the model being developed for "The Hub" will provide opportunities for similar projects throughout the state that tie together corporate and academic research excellence with strong transportation infrastructure.

Governor Murphy is also committed to putting New Jersey on the path to achieving 100% clean energy, which includes setting the most ambitious offshore wind target in the country. The EDA is working closely with other state agencies to fully implement the Offshore Wind Economic Development Act (OWEDA) and help ensure New Jersey leverages its location, infrastructure and talent to become the destination for offshore wind supply chain businesses.

Leveraging New Jersey's inherent advantages is also critical as we look to fully capitalize on the world-class research universities and strong industry presence that makes our state unique. To help foster a nexus between academia and industry and advance new opportunities for work and innovation, next month we will launch the Research with New Jersey database. This database will showcase our leading academic researchers and facilities, enhancing the visibility of research output and increasing opportunities for collaboration. Businesses will be able to easily gain access to relevant areas of expertise, facilitating the transfer of technology to the marketplace. We thank the Legislature for your support of this important initiative.

I am also pleased to be a member of the Governor's Jobs and Economic Opportunity Council, which has been charged with providing recommendations for stimulating job growth and workforce development in New Jersey, and most recently tasked by the Governor to create a comprehensive and coordinated strategic plan for reclaiming New Jersey's innovation economy.

To help position our cities to take full advantage of the social and economic benefits of the 21st century economy, we are actively working to identify opportunities that will help catalyze this kind of growth. We are excited about the promise the new federal Opportunity Zone program holds and look forward to working closely with the Governor's Office, our federal delegation, other state agencies, and local stakeholders to maximize the benefits for communities across New Jersey.

We are also looking to deepen our partnerships with Community Development Financial Institutions, other local economic development organizations, foundations, and myriad stakeholders to identify innovative financing techniques and expand the state's reach to entrepreneurs and small, minority- and women-owned enterprises.

We are happy to have just approved a new partnership with the African American Chamber of Commerce to establish and operate the Small Business Bonding Readiness Assistance Program, which will help level the playing field and expand opportunities for more small, minority- and women-owned businesses to participate in economic development projects. We thank the Legislature for passing this important bill.

As we move ahead in 2018, the EDA is committed to working closely with the Governor, Legislature and other stakeholders to catalyze a stronger and fairer economy that benefits every resident, community and business.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.