

February, 2010

Hon. David Paterson, Governor  
State of New York  
Executive Chamber  
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

Putnam County's travel and tourism industry desperately needs your assistance and quickly. Our travel and tourism industry which generates state and local taxes is facing a crisis of potentially catastrophic proportions. Slightly less than 12 months ago, the State Legislature passed the 2009-2010 State budget which appropriated \$4.3 million in matching funds to promote travel and tourism to the State's counties and regions. That money, later reduced to \$4.1 million due to the State's deteriorating fiscal condition, was due to be released to the Counties and Regions no later than January 1, 2010.

Sadly, Empire State Development which administrates the Matching Funds program has yet to even advise each county and region how much they are scheduled to receive and when. ESD stated that it has no idea when or if the funds will be available. Empire State Development blames it on the Division of Budget. The Division of Budget blames it on your Office.

These funds, which are desperately needed if we are to promote our visitor amenities, have yet to appear despite the fact that every county in the State has met its mandated obligations as spelled out by Empire State Development. Putnam County built its marketing program on the assumption that the money would be available within a reasonable time after we submitted our vouchers and they were approved. This is the time of year when Putnam County contracts advertising space and time based on the assumption that the State will meet its obligations, as the County meets its obligations. Sadly, that has not been the case.

As a result, Putnam County faces the possibility of literally having to shut down or drastically reduce our promotional programs and operations if the commitment of Matching Funds dollars is not forth coming in a relatively short time. This is the investment that generates local and state taxes. A shutdown or reduction of programs will also seriously impact our already depressed sales tax revenues.

As a resident of Putnam County, I respectfully request your assistance in getting Empire State Development and the Division of Budget to commit to the existence of and the amount of these funds. The funds must be released so that Putnam County can continue our travel/tourism programs that we rely on to generate tax revenue and sales tax revenue. Thank you for your help in this serious matter.

Very truly yours