

June 10, 2024

The Honorable Joe Tate
Speaker
Michigan House of Representatives

The Honorable Winnie Brinks
Majority Leader
Michigan Senate

The Honorable Matt Hall
Republican Leader
Michigan House of Representatives

The Honorable Aric Nesbitt
Republican Leader
Michigan Senate

Dear Leaders of the Michigan House and Senate,

As members of the Detroit Regional CEO Group, along with our regional partners, we are writing to express our support for the comprehensive, long-term economic development package currently under consideration in the House of Representatives.

The recent population commission report was yet another wake-up call that Michigan desperately needs a long-term, focused growth strategy. The report confirmed that Michigan is 49th in the nation in population growth since the turn of the century, with only West Virginia behind us. It also confirmed that statewide prosperity has declined precipitously, with personal income dropping from 120% to 90% of the national median. On the most important measures of the growth and prosperity of our state, we have been going in the wrong direction for decades—and we do not have much further to fall to be the worst performing state in the nation.

At this pivotal time for our state, we strongly urge you to choose action over inaction, especially with a proposal on the table that would take major strides in delivering the long-term, holistic economic plan that Michigan needs. As we understand it, the proposal currently under consideration represents a 10-year strategy that would invest:

- \$250 million annually in the state's major business attraction and site readiness program, otherwise set to expire after next year, but with a renewed focus on high-wage jobs, high-growth industries, and economic diversification.
- \$100 million annually for affordable and workforce housing, to meet the acute need for attainable housing that is critical to quality of life for existing residents, for businesses to be able to meet workforce needs, and to growing our state.
- \$50 million annually for community revitalization, to build the more vibrant downtowns, town centers, main streets, and waterfronts that are vital to attracting and retaining talent.
- \$200 million annually for transformational transit and mobility projects. This investment would finally make it possible to deliver the regional rapid transit lines in

Southeast Michigan needed to attract talent and catalyze growth—something every other dynamic and growing region in the nation offers. At the same time, it would enable other regions to invest in whatever mobility projects are most important for their regional growth—for example, the airport investments that are so critical to grow Northern Michigan as a place to live, work, and play.

We do not pretend that this package is a silver bullet that will solve all of the challenges we face as a state. But it is a serious and important step. Each of the investments follows the recommendations of the bi-partisan population commission. Each should ring true as a common-sense strategy to make our state more attractive and competitive. And most importantly, together they represent a holistic, long-term strategy—something we have never had.

In this moment of great challenge but also opportunity, the last thing that we can do is revert to our worst patterns as a state. Michigan is famous for changing direction on economic development, sending the message that we are not a reliable or serious place to invest. We are on course to do this yet again with the expiration of the state’s major business attraction and site-readiness program, and that failure would be compounded by the inability to come to consensus on *any* way forward.

Simply put, we can either stagnate not only in population and prosperity, but in our policy leadership—or we can embrace and work on this comprehensive, long-term vision. We strongly encourage you to do the latter.

Sincerely yours,

Gerard M. Anderson
Former Chairman &
Chief Executive Officer, DTE

Mary Barra
Chair and CEO
General Motors

Sandy Baruah
President and CEO
Detroit Regional Chamber

Robert Casalou
President & CEO
Trinity Health Michigan & Southeast Region

Matthew P. Cullen
CEO, JACK Entertainment
Chair, Detroit Regional CEO Group

David Dauch
CEO
American Axle

Tina Freese Decker
President and CEO
Corewell Health

Bud Denker
President
Penske Corporation

Bill Emerson
President and Chief Operating Officer
Rocket Companies

Dan Gilbert
Founder and Chairman
Rocket Companies

Ron Hall
President and CEO
Bridgewater Interiors, LLC

Vinnie Johnson
Founder, Chairman, and CEO
The Piston Group

Dan Loepp
President and CEO
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Mark Reuss
President
General Motors

Ray Scott
President and CEO
LEAR Corporation

Gary Torgow
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Christopher Ilitch
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Ilitch Holdings

Maureen Krauss
President and CEO
Detroit Regional Partnership

Cindy Pasky
Founder, President, and CEO
Strategic Staffing Solutions

Bob Riney
President and CEO
Henry Ford Health System

Shannon Striebich
President and CEO
Trinity Health Michigan Market

cc. The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
The Honorable Angela Witwer
The Honorable Sarah Anthony