

House Appropriations Committee
DCED Budget Hearing
Opening Remarks
April 13, 2023

Good morning Chairman Harris, Chairman Grove, and members of the Committee.

My name is Rick Siger, and I began serving as the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) upon Governor Josh Shapiro's inauguration in January.

I would like to introduce my colleague, DCED Executive Deputy Secretary Mike Hanna. Mike is here to help me answer your questions today.

I am deeply honored to serve in this role, and to join you today to discuss how Governor Shapiro's 2023-2024 budget proposal will strengthen Pennsylvania communities, empower our workers, and accelerate the growth of our businesses and economy.

Pennsylvania has several strengths that separate us from our competitor states as we work hard to attract and retain businesses and talent here in the Commonwealth.

We have a strategic location, world-class higher education institutions, and a unique mix of quality of life and affordability – to call out just a few examples.

But Pennsylvania MUST take steps to become more competitive—not just nationally but globally—and to supplement these inherent advantages with wise investments in the 2023-2024 budget.

Governor Shapiro's budget proposal takes critical steps to address our competitiveness, making commonsense and sound new investments in our business environment, workers, and communities. Here are a few examples:

For businesses, the Governor is proposing:

- \$20 million for the Historically Disadvantaged Business Assistance Program to support minority-owned and woman-owned businesses;
- A \$10 million increase for the Pennsylvania First Program to help attract and retain good jobs in PA; and
- \$3 million for the Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Grant Program to support registered apprenticeships.

For workers, the budget proposal includes:

- A \$2 million increase for WEDnetPA for incumbent worker training; and
- A \$1 million increase for the Manufacturing PA Innovation Program to pair our university students with manufacturers to develop innovative new solutions for the manufacturing sector.

And for communities, the budget calls for:

- An \$8.6 million increase for the Keystone Communities Program to support Pennsylvania Main Streets and foster economic growth, particularly in rural and less affluent communities;
- A \$1.45 million increase for the Municipal Assistance Program to help communities with the costs of municipal services, planning, and land use strategies; and
- A \$1.25 million increase for the Strategic Management Planning Program to equip communities with successful financial management strategies and avoid financial distress.

Throughout my career in the federal government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and now here in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I have focused on growing economies, driving innovation, and advancing opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background or ZIP code.

I carry that focus with me in my role as Acting Secretary of DCED every day and am committed to working with you as we grow Pennsylvania's economy equitably, enhance our competitiveness, and improve every resident's quality of life.

I strongly believe Governor Shapiro's 2023-2024 budget proposal is the first step in achieving those goals.

I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today, and I welcome your questions.

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