



**Testimony for the
Senate Community, Economic & Recreational Development Committee**

**PREP Programs and Partners, funding and delivery of programs, and economic
impact to the Commonwealth**

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

**Pamela Shupp, President, Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP)
Representing the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA) as President**

Distinguished Chair and members of the Committee, I am Pamela Shupp, President of the Greater Reading Economic Partnership, a public-private 501c(3) non-profit organization dedicated to facilitating economic development growth in Berks County, Pennsylvania. We are the primary point of contact for business attraction, retention, and growth. However, I am here today as the current President of the Pennsylvania Economic Development Association (PEDA). PEDA is the statewide association of local, state, corporate and non-profit economic development professionals. Many of the speakers that you hear from today are fellow PEDA members. And I especially want to thank Senator Scavello for participating in our recent spring conference in Harrisburg and for showing his dedication to economic development in the Commonwealth of PA.

PEDA's mission is to promote sound economic development policies, provide leading-edge economic development education and nurture an effective statewide economic development network to foster the economic growth of the Commonwealth.

PEDA's membership is comprised of over 300 individual economic development professionals representing the array of economic development organizations in the Commonwealth. This

membership includes Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), Local Development Districts (LDDs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), Ben Franklin Technology Partners (BFTPs), and Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs). It also includes county and regional economic developers, state government economic development employees, utility and transportation executives, industrial development authority directors, operators of industrial and technology incubators, chamber of commerce executives, municipal directors of community and economic development, engineering and construction executives, economic development finance professionals, commercial and industrial developers, and local, county and state elected officials.

In my thirty year career, I personally have been involved in many aspects of community and economic development and my depth of experience is not unique in world of PEDAs. Many of my colleagues also have substantial experience and backgrounds. We have administered an array of federal, state and local loan and grant programs, all with their own unique sets of requirements for the borrower. We have implemented business attraction and business retention strategies and programs. We have collaborated with all economic development partners to bring meaningful support to the business community.

PEDA understands that many current economic development programs could have substantially more of a positive impact with additional financial support or structural changes. We recognize that a state budget that strikes an appropriate balance between fiscal responsibility and strategic economic growth is challenging. But we are looking to positively influence and provide feedback on what is most meaningful in business attraction and retention. And, specifically, one of the top three legislative priorities is the PREP program and support for regional partnerships.

The Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) program is the regional economic development delivery system in Pennsylvania. In fact, this program provides the only operational money to support the local economic development delivery system for state programs. The Governor has proposed \$9.88M to be exclusively distributed between Industrial Development Corporations (IDCs), Local Development Districts (LDDs) and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).

PEDA supports the PREP program, regional cooperation, and regional strategies as well as the appropriation of \$9.88M. We support the \$9.88 M to be distributed exclusively between IDCs, LDDs and SBDCs. To achieve this and maintain the level of service and delivery PA businesses, PEDAs also supports establishing the Manufacturing PA program to separately fund Industrial Resource Centers (IRCs).

The other legislative priorities that are supported by our membership for 2017-2018 are:

IMPROVE THE REGULATORY CLIMATE IN PENNSYLVANIA

Permitting timelines and regulations associated with PA DEP, PennDOT and other state permitting agencies related to the land development process can result in increased time frames and substantial costs – delaying or deterring economic growth and job creation.

PEDA supports improved coordination and a streamlined permitting process along with an expedited and collaborative inter-agency review especially as it relates to high priority economic development projects.

ENHANCE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Shovel ready sites with appropriate infrastructure are critical to PA's competitiveness. The Governor has proposed \$19M to the Infrastructure and Facilities Improvement Program (IFIP) to provide multi-year financial assistance to service debt on major infrastructure projects.

PEDA supports funding for public and private infrastructure development through the appropriation of \$19M to the IFIP.

ESTABLISH A STATEWIDE LOCALLY-IMPLEMENTED BUSINESS RETENTION CALLING PROGRAM

Regional economic development organizations must have the resources to do effective outreach to support local businesses. Creating a business retention calling program coordinated by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and EDCs will ensure coordination with state programs and efforts in state and regional economic development.

PEDA supports establishing a statewide business calling program that is designed in partnership with EDOs, locally implemented by EDOs and funded for \$2.5M in addition to the proposed PREP allocation of \$9.88M.

SUPPORT INNOVATIVE TRAINING INITIATIVES

Workforce development programs that address the growing skills gap identified by Pennsylvania companies are essential to economic development. PEDA supports proven successful programs such as Industry Partnerships (\$1.813M proposed) and WEDnetPA, in addition to those focused on incumbent worker training, veteran entrepreneurship, and technical education that addresses identified skills gaps.

PEDA supports training initiatives that address the growing skills gap and develop innovative plans to integrate workforce development, economic development and job opportunities. PEDA also supports the proposed move of the Industry Partnerships program from L&I to DCED.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to be with you today and share economic impact information and local and regional economic priorities. PEDDA and its membership stand ready to continue to be a leading voice in economic development and we are happy to provide any additional information that you may request. Thank you.