



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Steven M. Neuhaus
County Executive

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Orange County Industrial Development Agency
4 Crotty Rd
New Windsor, NY 12553

Dear IDA Board Members:

Over the past decade, Orange County has experienced remarkable economic growth, especially in tourism, hospitality, and related businesses. Legoland NY, Woodbury Common, Angry Orchard, City Winery, local craft beverages and family recreational venues like the Castle in Chester have given rise to an ever-growing tourism and destination economy.

This industry was front and center at the 2nd annual Orange County Economic Summit held last month at SUNY Orange. Over 325 people came out to learn about the incredible growth in tourism, hospitality, and the film production industries. A major take away from the summit is that industry and business experts all agree that Orange County is strategically positioned to continue to reap the rewards of the modern destination and experience economy.

A critical component to growing our economy is having an adequate inventory of accommodation facilities. Whether it be for business or leisure, people need a place to stay when coming to Orange County. Hotel rooms are critical in fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors in Orange County.

Presently, during the height of the tourism season in April through November, we are at, or near full capacity at the vast majority of our overnight destinations. More hotels and overnight stays would allow our community to welcome a larger number of tourists, resulting in increased spending on local businesses, restaurants, and attractions. This, in turn, would lead to a boost in the local economy, job creation, and increased sales and hotel tax revenue.

Additionally, Orange County has contracted with the firm of Johnson Consulting to conduct a Conference Center Feasibility Study. At present there are no large facilities in Orange County that can handle significant corporate or large events. One of the criteria being evaluated is the current inventory of hotel rooms. The consultants have already told us that an adequate number of hotel rooms is critical to the success of such a

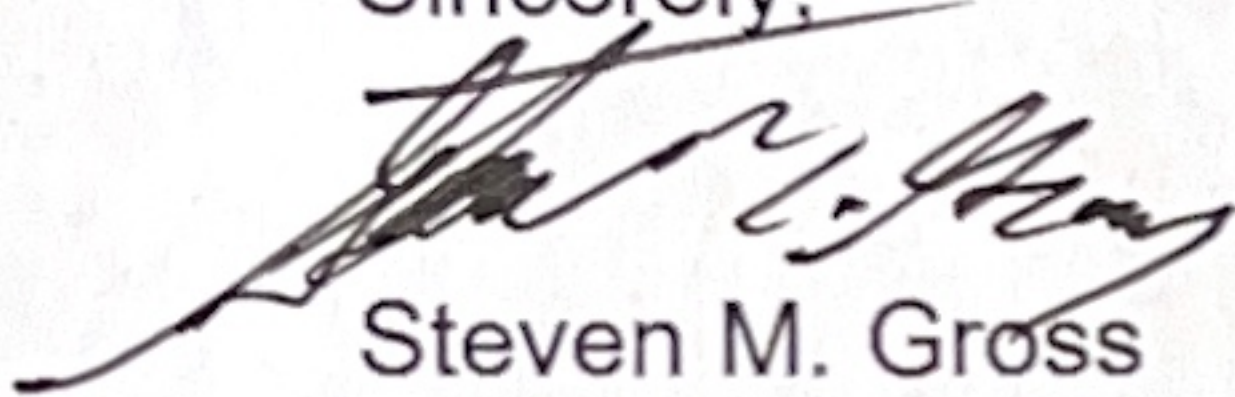
venue. Hosting conferences and events of significance requires the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the influx of attendees. Without a doubt, additional hotels are essential to meet this demand and to make Orange County a more attractive destination for various events and gatherings. The study will be formalized in the very near future, but know that it will have positive recommendations that Orange County can support more than one conference center facility.

Additionally, our County's key geographic location in the northeast continues to make us a prime destination for large corporations to locate. Companies like Amazon, McKesson, Medline, Pratt Whitney and now Tesla are all choosing to operate and grow right here in Orange County, NY. As our corporate inventory continues to expand, so does the need for their visitors and clients to have accommodations readily available.

Furthermore, having a diverse range of accommodation options available would enhance the overall experience of visiting Orange County. From budget-friendly to luxury, offering a variety of lodging choices ensures that visitors can find accommodations that suit their preferences and budgets.

Addressing the current shortage of hotels, we can capitalize on the potential for growth and prosperity in our community. Thank you for your dedication to the betterment of Orange County. I appreciate your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven M. Gross", written over a horizontal line.

Steven M. Gross
Director of Economic Development