



September 2, 2014

Dear North Carolina County Managers:

I cannot recall a time that New Hanover County has felt it necessary to issue a call to action across the state; however, with the inaction of the General Assembly at session's end to prop up the state's economic development competitiveness, I think such a call to action is necessary today.

At every level of government and across the political spectrum, leaders and voters have uniformly identified jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing our counties. The recent decision by the North Carolina General Assembly to adjourn without addressing key economic issues is contrary to the will of the people.

The elimination of key economic development programs and incentives puts the livelihood and economic competitiveness of our state at great peril. Programs that play a direct role in job creation and preservation, such as the Job Development and Investment Grant, Job Maintenance and Capitol Development Fund, Job Catalyst Fund, and Crowd Funding have effectively been eliminated. If a major or even mid-sized employer were to show interest in one of our counties, our State Department of Commerce would lack the necessary tools to ultimately attract that employer to locate here. In all likelihood, we will consistently miss out on economic development opportunities to neighboring states without NCGA action. Additionally, several successful tax credit programs, such as Film and Historic Preservation Tax Credits, were either completely cut or slashed to the point of complete ineffectiveness.

We will lose current jobs as a result of the NC General Assembly's actions on these tax credit programs and we will lose future jobs as a result of inaction on key North Carolina Commerce Department programs. Many industries have left The Great North State in the past few years. In our small corner of the state, we have lost or seen significant reductions in long standing employers such as Dak Americas, Invista, Coty, and others. Governor McCrory has rightly touted a "Carolina Comeback," and I agree that we are poised for just that, but how is a comeback possible when our governor, commerce department, and economic development community as a whole are hamstrung and lack the necessary tools to get our state back to where we need to be economically?

I urge you to join me in contacting Governor McCrory and your legislators, as well as those in surrounding counties, to ask for a special session to act on sustaining very vital economic development tools such as JDIG, film tax credits, and the like. There is too much at stake and the well-being of North Carolina's families is too important for action not to be taken now.

Sincerely,

Chris Coudriet
County Manager

c: New Hanover County Board of Commissioners
Wilmington City Council
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
Mr. Scott Satterfield, Wilmington Business Development
Mr. Johnny Griffin, Wilmington Regional Film Commission