

Ideas in Action

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Dominic M. Calabro, President and Chief Executive Officer

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In June 1992, Florida TaxWatch published an Ideas in Action featuring a letter to Governor Chiles from Mr. Tom L. Rankin, Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer and President of the Tampa-based Lykes Brothers. In his letter, Mr. Rankin discusses the problems associated with concurrency requirements which are part of Florida's 1985 Growth Management Act.

Following the publication of this letter, Florida TaxWatch was asked to publish the letter which Governor Chiles wrote in response to Mr. Rankin, discussing some of the positive actions which have been taken by his administration to help offset any negative impact of growth management regulations and requirements.

June 16, 1992

Dear Tom:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the "Development Report Card" and Florida's economic development policy. I agree with much of what you had to say about our economy and the directions in which we need to head to get things back on track. Where I must part company with you is your letter's general implication that Greg Farmer [Florida Secretary of Commerce] and I are just arguing with studies rather than really doing something about the situation. If you will take a good look at our efforts on several fronts--fundamentally reorganizing our economic development effort, attacking the process problems in our permitting and growth management systems and pushing for an adequate tax system--I think you will have to acknowledge that we are not just trying to "spend our way out of the current situation without substantive changes to laws, regulations and attitudes. . ."

Within the month, we will be announcing the Enterprise Florida Board of Directors. Their first meeting in July will mark the beginning of a new era for economic development in our state. This board will bring together our economic development leadership on a permanent basis--in business, education and government--to plan and direct our efforts to remedy the economic problems you cited in your letter. Enterprise Florida is not a "short-term fix" but a long-term approach to addressing the problems identified in the 1989 Cornerstone Study: organizational fragmentation, the duplication among government programs, the contradictions between economic policies and fiscal policies, the lack of accountability for real economic results, and the absence of a long-term economic strategy for our state. Giving private sector leaders a majority membership on this board would go a long way toward bringing about this "advised and predictable public sector" you call for in your letter.

It seems to me that the parallel work of the ELMS III Committee and the new Partners for a Better Florida Advisory Council directly responds to your concern about growth management and the Oregon example. By the end of this year, ELMS will offer specific recommendations on precisely those problems most often voiced by our business leaders--the future of the DRI process, the proper functions for regional planning councils, concurrency, the purpose and nature of our State Plan, and the degree of planning flexibility needed in our rural areas. The Partners group is mandated by law to come up with specific recommendations by January 1 for fixing our environmental permitting process problems: getting rid of duplicate environmental reviews, establishing one-stop permitting where possible, and speeding up the permit process.

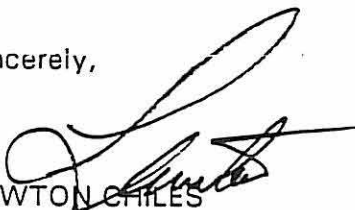
Finally, Tom, let's go back to the study that prompted your letter. It seems to me that the bulk of your concerns about Florida's economic development policy fall under the study's "Development Capacity Index" for which Florida was given a D. Tom, the components of that index are more or less a listing of what we have requested additional funding for through our Fair Share proposal and budget!

Our commitment to a rightsized State government is as strong as ever, and we are stretching our resources through public-private partnerships. But it is just not enough. If we are going to improve those specific measures comprising our grade--high school graduation rates, adult illiteracy, educational attainment, technology resources at our universities, our physical infrastructure--we must have the courage to institute basic reform in our tax structure. Those of us in a position to do something about this must act now.

Tom, I would very much like you to join Greg and me for lunch at the Mansion soon to discuss this in greater detail. Phil Wise will be calling soon to see if that's possible.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,



LAWTON CHILES

P.S. Tom, you mention the "inconsistent and erratic tax policy" of Florida. I want you to know I'm still looking for a few knights to carry my banners in that fight and I could suit you up right now. LC

This issue of **Ideas in Action** was
edited and produced by Catherine M. Haagenon
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