

Cuomo names development council members

Originally published: July 27, 2011 8:42 PM

Updated: July 27, 2011 9:15 PM

By JAMES T. MADORE james.madore@newsday.com



Photo credit: Charles Eckert | Gov. [Andrew M. Cuomo](#) shakes hands with Hofstra president Stuart Rabinowitz, center, and [Long Island](#) Association president Kevin Law at [SUNY Old Westbury](#). (July 27, 2011)

Gov. [Andrew M. Cuomo](#) tapped the presidents of [Long Island](#)'s largest business group and private university Wednesday to lead a regional council charged with creating jobs.

Kevin Law of the [Long Island](#) Association and Stuart Rabinowitz of [Hofstra University](#) will serve as vice chairmen of the 22-member economic development council. The group is one of 10 statewide established by Cuomo to compete for \$1 billion in grants and tax credits from [Albany](#) in 2011-12.

Other members of the local council include two defense contractors, a venture capitalist, farmer and banker. They will receive advice from the [Nassau](#) and [Suffolk](#) executives and four town supervisors - all of whom will not have a vote. Members will serve for two years and not be paid.

The group's first task will be to draft a five-year development plan, identifying industries likely to create the most jobs and to be enduring features of the economy. The plan is due in Albany by Nov. 14.

Speaking at SUNY Old Westbury Wednesday, Cuomo urged Long Islanders to look beyond county, town and village boundaries to foster business growth.

"Easier said than done," he told more than 250 people at the college's student center. "But this is the opportunity to do it. We have the incentive on the table. We're providing the leadership . . . You can't blame the state anymore . . . The rest is up to you."

Cuomo, responding to a concern raised by Assemb. Harvey Weisenberg (D-Long Beach), said it was "repugnant to every cell in my body" that young people feel their future is elsewhere.

Council member John Durso, president of the Long Island Federation of Labor, vowed to secure state funding for local projects from this year's \$1-billion pot, which is drawn from the budgets of nine agencies and authorities. "We're going to take as much as we can," he said.

The appointment of Durso and civil rights activist Elaine Gross garnered praise from liberal groups who have questioned the effectiveness of tax breaks and other incentives for businesses.

Jobs with Justice director Charlene Obernauer said she hoped the council would examine whether companies keep promises to create jobs and pay livable wages.

Some economic development officials were disappointed in the council's makeup. While supporting the concept, Jim Morgo of the Suffolk County Industrial Development Agency said he was "surprised" none of the area's IDAs has a council seat. "We are the principal economic development engines on Long Island," he said.

Cuomo spokesman Joshua Vlasto said the governor "believes the council includes the key economic and community leaders from across Long Island."

No elected officials are on the council, except for Lt. Gov. Robert J. Duffy, who will chair all 10 groups. But Suffolk Executive Steve Levy and Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan are content with their advisory roles. "I like being ex-officio," Nolan said. "There's a ton of talent there."

To read the article online follow the link: <http://www.newsday.com/long-island/nassau/cuomo-names-development-council-members-1.3056647>