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**EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES 2016 DISPARITY STUDY
TO MAXIMIZE MINORITY- AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS
PARTICIPATION ACROSS NEW YORK STATE**

Disparity Study Community Meetings to be Held in New York City

Empire State Development has launched the 2016 New York State Disparity Study, which will determine whether a disparity exists between the number of qualified Minority- and Business-Owned Enterprises (MWBEs), minority group members, and women ready, willing, and able to perform state contracts, and the number of such firms and individuals actually engaged by the State. The Study will examine all contracting activities throughout New York State from April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2015. The results of the Disparity Study will be used to determine what changes, if any, should be made to the MWBE program.

“The 2016 New York State Disparity Study will allow us to examine our MWBE practices and ensure that we are at the forefront of MWBE utilization,” said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. “We encourage all MWBE and non-MWBE business owners, as well as other stakeholders, to attend the community meetings, which are a vital component of the Disparity Study.”

Mason Tillman Associates, Ltd., an Oakland-based national expert in conducting disparity studies, has been retained by the State to perform the Study. The vendor will analyze public records, identify enterprises doing business in the State, and collect anecdotal accounts from MWBE and non-MWBE business owners doing business in the State’s market area.

Community meetings will be held throughout the state to provide detailed information about the Study and will serve as the basis for anecdotal contributions to the final report. Meetings are scheduled for New York City in January and February; the remaining Upstate and Long Island meetings will be held throughout the spring of 2016, at times to be announced.

Register for the NYS Disparity Study Community Meetings by contacting Mason Tillman Associates, Ltd. At (518) 207-0082, or by email at NYSDisparityStudy@mtaltd.com. Additional information and frequently asked questions can be found on the New York State Disparity Study website at <http://nysdisparitystudy.com>.

Brooklyn

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

12:30-2:30PM

Brooklyn Borough Hall Rotunda
209 Joralemon St, Brooklyn, NY

Queens

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

6:00-8:00PM

Greater Jamaica Development Corp
90-40 160th Street, Jamaica, NY

Staten Island

Thursday, January 14, 2016

1:00-3:00PM

Center for the Arts/College of Staten Island Lecture Hall
2800 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY

Manhattan

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

9:00-11:00AM

MIST Harlem
46 West 116 Street, Harlem, NY

Bronx

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

1:30-3:30PM

Hostos Community College Conference Center
500 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY

Under the Governor's leadership, more than 4,300 MWBEs have been certified, more than 3,600 have been recertified, and more than \$6.3 billion in state contracts have been secured by women or minority-owned businesses. As a result, MWBE certification and utilization on state contracts has more than doubled in just five years.

About Empire State Development

Empire State Development (ESD) is New York's chief economic development agency. The mission of ESD is to promote a vigorous and growing economy, encourage the creation of new job and economic opportunities, increase revenues to the State and its

municipalities, and achieve stable and diversified local economies. Through the use of loans, grants, tax credits and other forms of financial assistance, ESD strives to enhance private business investment and growth to spur job creation and support prosperous communities across New York State. ESD is also the primary administrative agency overseeing Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils and the marketing of "I Love NY," the State's iconic tourism brand. For more information on Regional Councils and Empire State Development, visit www.regionalcouncils.ny.gov and www.esd.ny.gov.

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