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**EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES
NEW MID-HUDSON REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

Empire State Development (ESD) today announced the appointment of Aimee J. Vargas as the agency's Mid-Hudson Regional Director. In her new role, Ms. Vargas will manage economic development initiatives for Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Dutchess, Sullivan, Ulster and Putnam counties.

"With her experience and local expertise, Ms. Vargas will be an invaluable addition to our team," said Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Kenneth Adams. "As regional director, Ms. Vargas will work directly with businesses and local development partners throughout the Hudson Valley to promote economic growth in the region and play a key role in coordinating the efforts of the Mid-Hudson Regional Council."

In her most recent role, Ms. Vargas served as Associate Counsel & Director for the Office of Environmental Justice at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). In addition, she has served as Director of Finance for the Town of Clarkstown in Rockland County where she provided strategic analysis for the Town Supervisor and Town Board to develop and implement fiscal policy for a \$134 million budget as well as public policy initiatives. Ms. Vargas also served on the Town's Economic Development Committee, which worked with chambers of commerce, large and small businesses, and economic development agencies throughout the County.

"It is an exciting time to be in economic development," said Ms. Vargas. "I am honored to work alongside ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Adams to promote Governor Cuomo's job creation strategy and to highlight the Mid-Hudson as an attractive place to do business. Working in partnership, I believe we can identify and overcome the barriers that challenge our local businesses, helping to create jobs and spur economic growth across the Hudson Valley."

"This is an outstanding choice to lead this important job in the Hudson Valley. With the Governor's Regional Economic Development Councils about to start, Ms. Vargas will be a strong leader and will help shape the future strategic plan for our region," said Mike Oates, President & CEO of the Hudson Valley Economic Development Corporation. "I have worked with Ms.

Vargas in the past and know her to be an innovative leader who will be up to the challenges facing the Hudson Valley.”

“Ms. Vargas’ experience with different levels of government combined with her legal background and her ability to facilitate matters, make her a great choice to lead the Mid Hudson regional office of ESD and the new Regional Economic Development Council,” said Ron Hicks, President & CEO of the Rockland Economic Development Council and board member of HVEDC. “I have worked with Ms. Vargas on local projects and I know she has what it takes to move forward the region’s economic development efforts. I applaud the Governor’s choice.”

Empire State Development is New York’s chief economic development agency and administrator of the statewide business resource portal New York First (www.NYfirst.NY.gov). The mission of Empire State Development is to promote business investment and growth that leads to job creation and prosperous communities across New York State. ESD also oversees the marketing of “I LOVE NY,” the State’s iconic tourism brand. For more information on Empire State Development, visit www.esd.ny.gov.



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