

October 16, 2019

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Office of the Governor  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

As leaders of Erie County's manufacturing and business community, we were encouraged by your recent affirmation of support for a community college in Erie County. We wholeheartedly agree that the time is now for Erie County to benefit from its own community college to meet the urgent needs of prospective employees and employers in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry's 28<sup>th</sup> Economic Survey, conducted in August 2018, only reinforces what we already know all too well in our corner of the state. The shortage of qualified and skilled workers was cited by most job creators as the most important issue affecting their ability to stay competitive in the global economy.

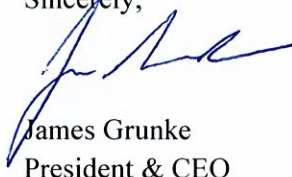
We are already seeing the implications of this in Erie County where a lack of qualified applicants compounded by an aging and retiring workforce is challenging our ability to meet customer demand and remain competitive. A community college serving all 38 municipalities in Erie County with accessible and affordable education would go a long way toward addressing those issues.

Under your leadership, Pennsylvania has grown its investment in the community college movement to upwards of \$300 million split annually by 14 colleges serving every major city in the state with one exception: Erie. We strongly believe it's time for Erie County to share in the benefits that our taxes have supported for decades.

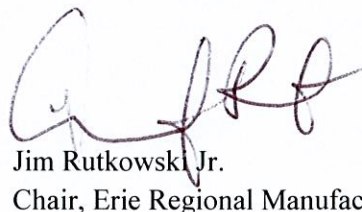
Governor Wolf, we think Erie County has earned the right to host and run the state's 15<sup>th</sup> community college. As such, we respectfully ask that you continue to advocate for a community college and encourage the Pennsylvania Board of Education to approve our community college application that has been pending since July 2017.

The skills that our students will gain will allow them to earn a good living and be part of a productive workforce that ultimately will benefit Erie and the entire commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



James Grunke  
President & CEO



Jim Rutkowski Jr.  
Chair, Erie Regional Manufacturers Partnership